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Coronavirus & Quarantine: The Economy, Career, and Jobs Edition

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The Veritas Forum

In this Virtual Veritas Forum we discuss the impact of the novel coronavirus on the global economy and how it may or may not reshape our concepts of commerce. Presented by a panel that includes Alfa Demmellash, CEO and Co-Founder of Rising Tide Capital; Andy Chan, VP of Innovation & Career Development at Wake Forest University; Arthur Brooks, social scientist, musician, and professor at the Harvard Kennedy School; Moderated by Andrew Schuman, Executive Director of The Veritas Forum. • Please like, share, subscribe to, and review this podcast. Thank you!

Transcript

Welcome to the Veritas Forum. This is the Veritas Forum Podcast, a place where ideas and beliefs converge. What I'm really going to be watching is which one has the resources in their worldview to be tolerant, respectful, and humble toward the people they disagree with.

How do we know whether the lives that we're living are meaningful? If energy, light, gravity, and consciousness are a mystery, don't be surprised if you're going to get an element of this involved. In today's virtual Veritas Forum, we hear from a panel that includes Alfa Demmellash, the CEO and Co-Founder of Rising Tide Capital, a nonprofit whose mission is to transform lives and communities through entrepreneurship, as well as Andy Chan, the Vice President of Innovation & Career Development at Wake Forest University; and Arthur C. Brooks, social scientist, musician, opinion writer for The Washington Post, and recently on the faculty of the Harvard Kennedy School and the Harvard Business School. In a discussion titled "Coronavirus and Quarantine," what big questions can we be asking? The Economy, Career, and Jobs Edition, moderated by the Executive Director of the Veritas Forum, Andrew Schumann.

What we're going to be talking about today is the economy, jobs, and careers. As we've been listening to you, listening to students and our campus partners, this is a huge

question on all of our minds. The implications for COVID-19 for the global economy, for our national economy, questions about the nature of the economic shock that we are in, questions about job opportunities, internships that are getting canceled or maybe on pause, questions about what this means for our location and calling and how we begin to navigate a world that's quickly changing.

What does the future of work? What does it mean for the communities who are most vulnerable to this economic shock and what practically should we do? There's a lot and we're not going to get to everything. We're going to try to make as much progress as we can. Fortunately, we are joined by three fantastic people we just love.

I'm going to invite them in kind of one at a time here. I'd first like to welcome in Andy Chan. Andy serves as the VP for Innovation and Career Development at Wake Forest.

University has that Stanford before that, has a well-filed experience. Coaching students on kind of the college to post-college transition, has a ton of connections and networks within industries across the US. Andy, just thankful for you being here.

Thanks for being with us. Thanks, Andrew. It's great to be here.

It's great to see everyone. Second, I'd like to welcome Alpha Demolash. Alpha is a good friend of ours as a remarkable personal story that you should all get to know and has really dedicated her life to supporting entrepreneurs in urban communities through a whole range of resources and financing.

I think just has a fascinating perspective on sort of that whole world, that whole part of the economy is really excited, Alpha, for what you're going to bring and thank you for being with us. Thanks for having me. And then finally, Arthur Brooks.

Arthur, we are so excited to have you. Arthur is the former president of the American Enterprise Institute, currently a professor in the Kennedy School and the Business School at Harvard. Has a fascinating career during it.

We may touch on some of it, but just excited for you to bring for a lot of perspectives. Arthur, thank you for being with us. Thank you, Andrew.

Great to be with all of you. It's a real honor and pleasure. Well, let's dive in.

And I'd love us all to get a little bit of context for our three guests. And so, first question and Andy will start with you is, given that our lives are all different and there's been a description, would love you to share a little bit with us just how your daily rhythms have changed. What does your life look like now? So, sorry for you.

Well, I'm here in my home in Menlo Park, California. And I'm sort of a hold up with my family, which is great. I have a three kids, one who's already grown and out of that

house, not a college, but one is a senior at Pepperdine and one who's a senior in high school.

And I would say the positives have been that I think I've got, I've like, like, earned back maybe 12 hours I'd used to spend either traveling or commuting like every day. So, I've actually got time back to do things like spend with my family and to be able to read and to actually spend time being quiet and being still, which was actually one of my New Year's goals this year, which was not something I intended to have happen, but it has really worked out that way. And on the probably not so great side from a rhythm standpoint is that I'm very separated from my team at Wake Forest and that we really learned how to use lots of tools to be able to communicate like Zoom, like Slack.

That's really helped. But I would say more than anything, I just feel the, honestly, the grieving that my seniors in school are feeling to sort of have their year be shattered and to not have the experiences that they were hoping to have. It's really hard and I feel that way about a lot of students too.

Like, I'm in this work because I love students and what they're all going through is really, really tough. And we're trying to do our part to be helpful to them. And I'm glad we're able to have those conversations so that we can hopefully provide a little hope in a time of a darkness.

Thank you. Alpha, let's turn to you. How your rhythms of life changed? Yeah, I think similar to Andy, I also am grounded at home.

I live in Bayon, New Jersey, which is about 20, 30 minutes from Manhattan. So I am at home with my two children as well, who are four and seven. So a pre-K and first grade teaching gig was dropped on my lap about two weeks ago, what I should say in my inbox.

It took me about a week to figure out that my first grader actually also has a music teacher, an arts teacher, and a whole bunch of other things that I'm still getting used to. So it's been really phenomenal and that mornings are tough because there is this other job of teaching the kids. My husband is also in, but we're completely, I mean, we're working parents and we put the kids in daycare six weeks after they were born.

So this is the first kind of intensive time as a family where we're responsible daily for their well-being. So that shifts a lot of our work to odd hours. So I'm also the inbox, I think simultaneously, was also exploding, like probably everybody else's because everyone is like, oh, now you're working digitally.

So different expectations around responsiveness. But overall, just in deep mode of reflection, there's just a lot to take and have put into place some practices, daily meditations, actually for our entire team. It took kind of a week to get that organized,

but morning and evening, just creating new structures for how we can work together, new practices, to help us feel grounded because I too, everything that we do at work is all relational offline and event-based.

So it's been a huge transition for us. Arthur, why don't we go to you? Yeah, so I live in Brookline, Massachusetts, right across the river from Harvard. And I wasn't expecting to be spending this much time at home.

Usually about 50% of my time is ordinarily spent on the road. I do a lot of public speaking. And I'm very, very late on a book manuscript.

And I'm not going to say that this crisis is an act of God to get me to get my book in because that would be so granddising and ridiculous. But I will say that I'm getting a lot of book written. And you know what, it's funny because you, you, when you write many, my co-panelists have written books too.

And there's this process of sort of, Elizabeth Kübler Ross wrote that famous book on Death and Dying and the process, The Stages of Grief. That's like the stages of writing a book too. And you're avoidance, you know, this sort of thing.

And I was avoiding it and I can't anymore. So the bottom line is I'm spending time at home working in my book manuscript. I'm also launching a column in a podcast.

And I have a lot of creative time for that. And in a weird way, it's blessing. But in a not so weird way, it's also a blessing because I'm spending 24 hours a day with my, my youngest daughter is a junior in high school with my wife Esther.

We have two older sons who are quarantining in different places, one in community where he lives in Princeton, where he's graduating, sort of graduating. I mean, we don't even know what that means anymore. He's at Princeton online university, which we'll all be delighted to know is just as expensive as the in-person version.

And my younger son is an infantryman in the US Marine Corps, where they're currently, actually have Corona on their base. So they're all, you know, quarantining down there on that as well. So, you know, everybody's dealing with this in different ways.

One of the things that I've talked about an awful lot with my students and with others is as a matter of productivity and life structure, it's important to not rely on the exoskeleton of externally imposed schedules. So for example, a lot of my students at Harvard Business School, they get their whole schedule from the Harvard Business School. And it's important that you have an endoskeleton to your own productivity as well.

The same thing is true, by the way, for those of us who have a traditional religious faith, I'm a Christian, a lot of people call our two people, and other religious faiths as well. They

tend to take an exoskeleton of their worship. It's important to have an endoskeleton to that as well.

This is this big opportunity for me to practice what I preach, to create the endoskeleton of my work life and of my prayer life and my worship. And so far so good. I think I'm going to get another 45 days of this as well.

So I know we'll all be pulling for each other. Thank you. Thank you.

I'm looking at the questions already accumulating and not surprisingly, a lot are going right after sort of how do we understand the economy right now? What's going on in different industries? Just how do we form a perspective on this? So Andy, would love you to start off. I think each one of you is going to bring a very different, interesting, fantastic one to this question. But really, what I'd love to dive in on is sort of, A, what are you actually seeing happening right now economically? And then B, where do you think this is going? And I know that's a, yeah, I'll just leave it at that.

What are you seeing right now? I'm going to, what's your sense of where this going? It's a really, it's a really tough question to answer because it's so fluid and so dynamic. One of the first things that we did with our team was to say, let's, let's not move into action right away, but try to do everything we can to assess, which actually really happening. And what happened week one versus week two, and now we're sort of in week three to me, at least as I think about when things really started to feel like they were getting shut down, everything keeps changing.

So it's hard to draw like a very straight line to what the future holds based on this little moment in time. The actually the positive thing about doing that was that in an interesting way, a lot of students and colleges were on spring break. So the students weren't actually like in the middle of class, they were sort of in this middle sort of place right then where it almost like people were taking a little bit of break.

What we have seen though is that companies are really in a place where they're trying to figure it out. And that some have actually very quickly realized their business are going to get hit so hard, travel, hospitality, other related kinds of businesses that they very quickly started to say we actually have to get to survival mode. We have to find a way to reduce our expenses in such a way that we can make this through for a pretty extended period of time, not just being sure.

So if you're unfortunate enough to have gotten an offer from one of those companies for an internship or a job, they might have already told you we're not going to have a program. And so we have to sort of let you go basically rescind that offer. We've seen that in some cases, I feel like maybe in terms of sheer numbers like five to 10 percent of cases.

So it's not everywhere. But the balance of the companies are really trying to assess it. And so there's sort of an away in C mode.

And so obviously that's creating a lot of uncertainty and fear for everyone because everyone starts to project sort of preparing for the worst in a way. On the other hand, what I will say is that there are still companies posting jobs on all the different systems, whether you use handshake or LinkedIn or Indeed, you will see more and more companies still posting jobs. And what I will say that for the first couple of weeks, students were really not participating.

I think they were still so shell shocked by what had occurred. Really, the fact is that they as adults had not experienced like this. I mean, in 2008, it was sort of like this, but this feels even more sudden and more dramatic.

This feels like it's impacting everyone in some way, shape or form as opposed to just select industries. They definitely were just being born in 2001, 2001, the time of the dot com bus happened. So for us, we've sort of seen this before in a way, but this one is definitely different.

And I mean, obviously our hope is that it won't be long lived. It will actually be hopefully short and we can start to turn it around. But I think someone last week's used the phrase like prepare for the worst, but hope or pray for the best.

I think we all have to do that just sort of thinking about worst case scenarios. I think that's what organizations tend to be doing. So I will say that I don't want to paint at all like this zoom and gloom picture, but I think later we're going to talk a little bit about like what can you do to make sure that you have a chance.

And there are some things that students can do to have a chance to be into the marketplace. And also other ways that they can learn and develop professional skills that actually could be really valuable, even though traditional things aren't going to be available. I will say there are some sectors where they seem to be really strong.

I think Arthur might refer to some of these, but we've seen logistics as a fight chain, some areas of retail, healthcare, and food services. And then finally within tech, as you can imagine, any companies that are fully online, any companies where what they're doing is they're enabling online capabilities for organizations and individuals like those kinds of companies that had already been doing that, they're flying like they are looking for more people, they need more people. All these different sectors actually need more people than they had planned.

They may not be the jobs that actually you thought you went to college to get, but at this moment, you might say, you know, it is better to have a job that I get some pay and get in the market versus wait for the perfect thing. And I do think that that's something

that everyone's going to have to recalibrate and say, maybe I have to do some things or take some things now that were different than what I thought, but at least I'll be sort of in the market and in the game. So do you think there's some sectors where there are things happening? I think if you go on any of the different boards, especially LinkedIn, Handshake, or indeed they've got a lot of what are the jobs that are hiring companies that are hiring listed that it'd be really worth going after.

And I think students more than anything need to sort of not pull themselves out of the market because they're down. I think if they're ready, make sure they're participating. Thank you.

Now it's super helpful. And I'd love to look at it from kind of a small business perspective, Alpha. If you could share some of what you're seeing, I mean, you're working with a lot of urban entrepreneurs right now and small businesses and what are you seeing? Yeah, I think the reality, and we've heard this as a common refrain, small businesses are the backbone so far, the backbone of our economy.

And when you have a quarantine like this, there are 30 million plus small businesses in the US that are essentially grounded. It was the exception of those that are essential services. So in many ways, even kind of reading the jobs report and seeing where we're at right now, the numbers are probably just statistically looking at it much, much more than that because there are so many self-employed individuals and small businesses that are currently just not able to operate.

And for many small businesses, and that's 99% of all businesses in the US, and for those that are small as in 10 employees and under, which make up the vast majority of businesses owned by women, by minorities, for them, the digital access points and proficiency in using digital tools to get online is not there. There is a huge digital gap, right? So, and many of those businesses that I'm talking about are the ones that Rising Tide works with, Rising Tide Capital is the nonprofit that I've been working with for the past 15 years as a co-founder. And so part of what we're witnessing is just the dramatic impact on livelihoods and cash flow for those businesses, which is their their lifeline.

So on the flip side, as extremely alarming and challenging as it is to know that for many of those small businesses, they don't have the option of working from home or having automated paycheck that can go into their accounts. They are very much at the mercy of relationships they've built with their customers and others in community that similar to Rising Tide exists to support their overall resiliency and well-being. So, we've seen some amazing things.

We've seen the entrepreneurs we work with. We work in Six Cities in New Jersey and we have partners who work in three other states in Chicago and the Carolinas. And we've observed what we've always believed to be true about entrepreneurs.

They pivot quickly. They have a huge proclivity for action and they've mobilized. We've seen entrepreneurs mobilize volunteers to get food for seniors, you know, go, you know, organize and orchestrate huge shopping trips to make sure that seniors and those that are vulnerable can actually get food.

We've seen those with the capacity to sew. Actually, both put up swing classes for how to put together a mask as well as, you know, come together to create some masks. We've seen entrepreneurs who are working in the community supported agriculture space be able to pull together to actually deliver fresh vegetables and meats and eggs.

And those are all tied to local supply chains of others who work in agriculture. And, you know, those are not those are perishable goods and they need to get to somebody that, you know, has paid for them. So, what we've seen is rallying and in many ways it's very exciting to both see kind of the exposure of where our vulnerabilities are and as local economies and kind of being tied to a broader supply chains and where the huge and immense opportunities there are both for shoring up infrastructure around some of our small businesses across the country, but also counting on that relational piece and how it shows up when it's time for responding to a crisis like this.

So, I really want to come back to the sort of what this is exposing and in our system and sort of where the opportunities are. Also, for those of you who have not, they did not see the job report out this morning, 6.6 million Americans filed for unemployment last week, which is to sort of vastly the record in American history and twice what it was a week before, so up to 10 million in the last two weeks, which is shocking. Let's, Arthur, would love to move to you and possibly to zoom out even a little bit and how it really makes sense of what's going on.

So, thanks. I appreciate it. Let me talk a little bit about what's going on macroeconomically and then how each of us can kind of see those macroeconom conditions and the story that I had to tell, I don't need to rehearse the bad news.

I think I should bring in a little good news and I realize that seems weird because good news is not on the front page in the New York Times at all these days. We are hearing a lot of comparisons with 2008 and the reason is because that's in recent memory the last time we had sort of a Chernobyl-like event for the American economy. This is way more dramatic than 2008.

The jobs in production and production are much, much more extreme. It's true that the jobs report today, people filing for unemployment, 6.6 million, we've never literally never seen anything like this. And that's of course the bad news and that's what makes the news.

But let me point out four ways in which it's very different than 2008 and which should be somewhat reassuring. Now, again, not to minimize the danger of this is Alpha points out.

This is an extremely dangerous time for industries and individuals and entrepreneurs that are on razor thin margins that have really low liquidity, not very much cash on hands.

This is a serious business. As for the policy responses to that have to be comprehensive and have to be quite serious and abundant for taking care of that, those crises, that part of the crisis as well as possible. But here are four differences with 2008 that all go in favor of people who are coming onto the job market and to businesses that currently exist.

Number one, the jobs report that we saw today with a huge number of people going on employment are doing so because of something that we've done on purpose. There was a huge amount of uncertainty and mystery in 2008. I remember people asking if the ATMs were going to stop working in 2008 because we didn't actually understand the nature of what was folding up inside financial markets.

There were very complicated derivative and investment instruments that were imploding and creating sort of a weird almost nuclear type chain reaction inside financial markets that were horribly poorly understood. That was super scary because we didn't know where it was going to end. What's happening now is we're shutting down our economy in response to a public health crisis temporarily on purpose.

That's destroying jobs. That's no good. But the fact that it's on purpose means we understand it.

That's point number one. Point number two is truly is temporary. Nobody, even the most doomsday scenario that we're talking about for public health, thinks that this is years, it's months.

In a couple of months, there's going to be way more increased economic activity. In a small number of months, we'll be back to something closer to normal or going back toward normal. Nobody thinks that in the fall, there's not going to be significantly much, much more economic activity.

This truly is temporary. 2008, when we didn't know, was this a permanent change in the way the capital system worked or didn't work? We simply didn't know. In point of fact, the 2008 crisis went on for a pretty long time.

It was 10 years before economic growth became more even. Third, we really actually understand exactly the nature of what's happening economically here. The fact that there's no mystery to it is really, really important, which leads to the fourth point, which is that there's no structural problem with the American economy.

There's nothing that we don't have financial markets that are hugely based on hard assets, like houses that are wildly overpriced, and you're going to have a big correction

in that. That's not happening right now. Those four things together mean that basically my message is, it's bad, it's going to pass.

The biggest problem that we have right now, three weeks in, this is right at the beginning, is that we have a psychological problem in this country with a tremendous amount of discomfort having to do with the fact that the news is necessarily really negative and the fear that we have about the public health crisis is bleeding into what we're talking about economically. The uncertainty that we feel about it is stimulating a lot of cognitive processes that are very unproductive and really really uncomfortable. I think that we need to talk as much about the psychological problems as we do about the macroeconomic problems, and that's where I've been spending a lot of my time personally.

That's actually a great segue to where I want to go next, which is, and Andy, we'll start with you again on this one, but regardless of the time duration here, it's a disruption. Certainly in the short term, Andy, you mentioned, there's summer internships, jobs that are possibly getting rescinded. How would you be encouraging students to think in this moment or reframe, and certainly a pause in some sort of disruption to think and reframe through the question of what success looks like and how to begin, thinking reframe what is being pursued, what is worthy of pursuit, what success looks like? That's a really good question, a hard question.

I think picking up on what Arthur was just talking a bit about is that so much about how we seem to get moved oftentimes is by what's happening in our immediate situation right now. What it felt a little bit like for a lot of people was that the wind was behind ourselves and that the job market, the job economy was so positive that you could do anything. A lot of people, a lot of times, think that in my role, that isn't the best time to actually have your job because it's so easy for students to get jobs, but actually one of the reasons why I don't like it all that much when it's too strong is that people take for granted that it is easy to get jobs and that they don't really realize that they're actually just having to be lucky that during this time of life and this moment, it was really actually good.

What happens is that when things are in a downturn, everyone is learning, paying attention, working harder, asking for wisdom and direction and all of a sudden people will always say this when you actually ask people who were in the job market, I can't speak to entrepreneurs because I know that's a particularly difficult time because your livelihood is there, but with a student who's in the beginning of their life, trying to figure out how to work is that it's those students who actually said, "I worked so hard to get a job that I learned skills in ways to actually find a job and think about the job market that it helped me for the rest of my life." That pursuit into actually grew up and had a time where the market was so positive when the market turned and they had to figure out how to get a job, they realized, "Well, I never really learned actually how to do this even

though I'm 25 or 30 years old and I'm not sure exactly what to do." One of the frame-ups that I feel like we sometimes get a little caught up in, I do think about this about this idea around what the purpose of education is, somehow we've reduced it down to the reason why you get an education is to get a better job. That seems to pervade our culture. We tend to actually reduce the value of education as to get a quote-unquote better job and that equals success.

I actually don't like that very much, even though that's part of what my job is responsible for. I actually like to help students really unpack what's the real value of why you went to school to grow as a person, to actually learn about how to think and meet people and learn how you want to live life in such a way that you will have a foundation that you can build up over time, that you're actually trying to become a learning machine that you will actually, if you take Carol Dweck's work on growth mindset, I hope everyone's trying to figure out how do I have a growth mindset for my life. For whatever reason, for some reason, we actually put ourselves in boxes pretty quickly.

What was the quality of the school you went to? What was the ranking of the school you went to? What were the grades that you got? We start to label ourselves with a bunch of badges that make us think that because we did these things were successful because we're collecting all these things, we're going to have all these guarantees in life. I think we've all learned there are no guarantees in life. We realized we never were fully in control.

I used to teach a little seminar at Stanford that was called Career and Life Vision. One of the number one things that we would have students do is try to envision 30, 40 years from now, if you were being honored at a dinner, what would the people who you are friends and family, what would they say about you? What did you do? How do you come across and what comes across every single time? These people end up really communicating that who they are, and their character is way much more important than what they did. What they did, they start to realize they didn't really have an idea of how that was all going to unfold because it actually, it came about along the path and along the journey.

No one ever had this perfect plan that if I just do this and do this and do this, everything's going to be great. I do think there's another book out there that is very, it's a very fun, easy read that was written by a Microsoft product manager called "Nobody's to Somebody's." What he did was he interviewed 40 or 50 people who all were in their 40s and 50s and 60s who are very successful and he asked them, "When you were in college, what were you thinking?" What he came to realize is that none of those people had, like a few people had, like I had this plan is what I want to do. More of them had a lot of different ways that they actually got to where they got to, which were necessitated by their own story and their own life and not necessarily by this idea that we have a plan.

I guess that's my long way of saying, I think we somehow attached success to, especially at a young age, if we don't do the right next thing, then life is over as we know it and the next thing will be bad after that, next thing will be bad after that, and we go into a downward cycle. I actually think that we're being asked today, "Well, how much control are we really in?" and how much might we actually take this time of quiet to learn how to become more emotionally resilient? How much time might we take to think about who are we in the world as a spiritual being in a physical world? How can I actually develop some habits and some ways that will help me so that next time, whenever that next big crisis will happen in five, 10, 15, 20 years, I'll be ready because I'm actually more emotionally resilient and less about, "Am I career resilient? Do I have a job?" Because even every person right now who has a job at some level is thinking, "How am I going to have this job?" I don't even know. I know for students, it feels like I don't have a job.

You guys are on the good side of it. I'd arguably say there are a lot of people who have jobs who actually don't have jobs and have who wouldn't say that either. We're all in this together.

We're all suffering together, and actually there's something honestly sad but very beautiful in that because we can all be more empathetic and relate to each other and we can be thinking about who are we more than what do we do? That's a framework that I throw out there for you to consider. Super helpful. It reminds me of something David Brooks said last forum, which was when you're actually liberating to have your plan shattered because you realize you're more than your plans.

It just begins this whole cycle of really potentially very profound rediscovery of the things that matter most. I love to circle back to that. I'm sure we'll come back to that in the student Q&A.

I'm already seeing student questions about this very thing. Alpha would love to go to you and try to get your sense of how is this causing us to look again at life? I mean certainly at what success looks like for us. If you'd like to share some of the things you think this is exposing about our economy too, feel free to do that as well.

Go for it. Sure. It's interesting because I certainly have a lot of empathy with some of what my co-panelists have shared and so far it's like our desire for normalcy and desire for knowing that the crisis will end as Arthur was saying that this isn't something that is structurally kind of in play for the long haul, it's not years.

At the same time something that we've been thinking about here at Rising Tide for the past couple of years really and pently is that things are shifting in ways that are profound. In many ways this pandemic is just bringing it out into the forefront and the most glaring and perhaps helpful way. But in addition to all of the challenges that we've had trying to grapple with what do we do is growing inequality, what do we do is the fact that so many people do feel like the system is "rigged" that people, the vast majority of

the country that wants to have access to good and well-paying jobs don't necessarily see that as an option for them.

And labor force participation has never been this low in 37 years I think, 60 something percent. So there is a and for many of the communities that I work in at Rising Tide, unemployment has been historically consistently high, right, because of historic marginalization and so on. So I think there is this part of and then what's over the past couple of years, what we've been looking at is all of the converging trends and crisis trends, whether it be looking at what's happening with climate or looking at what doesn't mean to have the kind of technologies that we have like the one we're using right now to stay really connected.

But at the same time, a lot of the technologies and advances in exponential technologies in particular do show us a path where there could be massive technological unemployment and that it will be painful at least for some period of adjustment. And trying to communicate out these types of things that are gradual in nature, even if they take five to seven, ten years and some of the technological conversations we've been having, it's really hard to raise awareness or to really start thinking creatively and in a way that is embodied and that we can see and feel and doesn't feel kind of philosophical or esoteric. It's been very difficult to do that kind of awareness raising in a nuanced way.

And so in many ways, I'm very excited on one hand that nature has orchestrated the occasion to round us all in our homes and say, "Time out, here you are." And it's a very embodied situation where the public health concern is in many ways raising awareness that we are embodied creatures. We are physically here. It's like, yes, our mind can do a ton.

Our little technological devices can achieve a lot, but we have limits and boundaries. And I think that's a really healthy thing for us to be aware of as humans as a species. And I think those things are brought to the fore.

And then I think in terms of our economy, we're also getting that kind of very embodied and stark picture of who is an essential worker. What are essential businesses? What do we rely on to support life and well-being in our economy? And then looking at what that looks like in terms of how we value those businesses or perhaps those workers, right? Especially when we're talking about jobs and work and work that edifies the species, edifies our families, ensures that we're well and secure and safe. The vast majority of those who are working as frontline health workers or those who are doing the refilling the shelves or doing the long-haul truck driving, they are not the most well-compensated parts or valued parts of our economy.

And so I think the opportunities that I see and perhaps the cyclical nature of the virus might offer us more opportunities to really in an embodied way to begin to grapple with what doesn't look like to value our essential workers and essential businesses differently

in our economy. What kinds of opportunities for jobs and for education or for career pathways? Does this open for those who are currently seniors in college or those who are on a path? How could we broaden our imagination about the kinds of things that we actually need to fix or dedicate our imagination and capacities to? And I think the other part of this that I think is glaringly important, especially when I'm having conversations around technology and exponential technologies and much of the growth sectors in our economy where the opportunity is for investors, for entrepreneurs, thus far for the past 15 years that I've been at this work, has been in the technology space. And health is also another huge sector, right? And particularly for the tech space, it's been very much around how do I, especially I as somebody who still kind of feels proximate to my college years.

Perhaps I have, you know, many years have gone by but in my imagination, I'm still proximate to some of my, you know, the college seniors perhaps. And the questions that animate me have been, you know, how do we put our bodies, our embodied selves and our talents, our God-given purpose towards things that really do add value and reinforce the things that will give us the kind of planet, the kind of home life and family life we desire. And I think when I look at some of our technological innovations, obviously they do wonders, like in times like this, none of us would be under quarantine.

This idea of shutting off an economy would never, ever have worked in the past. It's working right now somewhat because we have the ability to have food delivered and that we can work from home. But a big part of the exciting opportunity and what I've been looking at is how do we use this time as an opportunity to put tech in its right role.

And its right role as a tool. And I think when I think about, you know, what success might look like for those who are currently deliberating their career paths, it's really having that balance of recognizing that they are embodied beings that have access to all these tools and information and their life and their career and their purpose is not inside of that technology. They are separate from it and are able to leverage it to actually reinforce what is truly essential in our communities and in our economy.

Thank you. You know, it's really, I'm like with all these comments, I'm seeing more and more questions come in. So I do want to move to student questions relatively quickly, but Arthur would really love for you to take a crack at this one in terms of, you work with students all the time.

So, you know, how would you encourage a reframe around success in a time like this? Okay, so yeah, so what does success look like? What are our objectives? And it's easy to say, well, we get through this. Success is getting through this, but that's a huge wasted opportunity. Here's what I mean by that.

Nobody wants the coronavirus crisis. Nobody wants it. If any of us could wave a wand or have our prayer answered automatically to make it go, we would in a heartbeat, but we

can't.

We're not going to be able to do that. So it seems. So getting through it is just not good enough.

I've done a lot of work over the course of my career with social entrepreneurs. I wrote a textbook on social entrepreneurship at one point and I interviewed hundreds of social entrepreneurs. And the most amazing thing about entrepreneurs in general, but social entrepreneurs in particular, is that when the rest of us see a challenge or a crisis, a tragedy, they see a big opportunity to do good, to live their mission for those who are faith-based as to do God's will.

And these are opportunities. Look, think about it. We all come from a million different backgrounds and we all have a lot of different beliefs on this call, but why are you alive? Not what are you doing? You're going to college.

Yeah, I got it. You know, you're taking classes. You're on the job market.

I understand the what, why? You know, if somebody says, why are you doing these things, what's your answer? And if it's not about earning your success and serving other people, it's not good enough. It's not good enough for any of us. That's an inherently entrepreneurial thing.

Okay. So right now, each of us faces a crucible. Some people will lot.

You know, some people are facing health crises. They're being laid off. You know, some people are really, really scared for very good reasons.

Most of the people on this call and most of the people in this country and around the world don't face these kinds of crises, but they're still accrucible. They're still a challenge. What is the opportunity? What are the attachments that you're confronted with that it's time for you to get rid of such that you can truly treat your life like a startup because that's all you got.

You know, I mean, enterprise is so boring when it's about only about money. You know, enterprise is exciting when it's about you and what's written on your heart and you're crafting your life, the gift that you've been given of your life, the startup of your life to craft it. And you only actually see the opportunity when there's something missing, when there's something that you need to do, when you're being called into action, when there's a building on fire, a fireman goes running in your fireman.

What does that mean? So, so what I'm thinking about for success is for each one of us, you know, what what is it about your fears? This is your opportunity to take on. I mean, what did Andy say a minute ago? 20 years from now, something else like this is going to happen. What is your opportunity to craft your life so that you're better able to take on

something like this in the future? What is it? You know, if there's also this concept of being an entrepreneur in the service of others.

You know, what is the opportunity right now? And there's some very tangible ways to think about this is very, you know, I can be sort of theoretical and macro macro about it. But, you know, we've been talking about these wonderful technologies, zoom, sky, FaceTime, you know, you have an opportunity to to actually improve your life by spending one to two hours a day on this and looking into the eyes of your friends and getting the oxytocin that your brain craves and all that good neurological stuff. But here's the social entrepreneur opportunity for each one of us.

Who do you know who needs to hear from you and who hasn't for a long time? Who's lonely? Who needs love? Who needs affirmation? Who needs your mission lived out today? You've got time, you've got means, you've got technology, do it. Why? Because this is going to be over just like this. Your opportunity is going to pass.

The window is going to close and you're going to be back to ordinary business as usual. Don't let this pass. Success means two years from now, five years from now, 10 years from now, you're going to say, you know, that coronavirus thing was so terrible and it was such a moment of growth for me.

It was so, it was such an opportunity for me to see my own mystery, my mission, my, my apostolate. That's when I saw me for the first time in a long time. Arthur, we'll go to student questions right after this and start talking more practically.

But I've heard you talk before and write about this before about a moment you had earlier in your career. I think when you're still a musician and started to make this pivot and you read a passage from Bach that had this kind of really significant influence on you and ended up changing your direction around this question of why and your own why. Would you be willing to talk just a little bit about that? Yeah, so and most people on the call, I don't know that the music reference, I was a classical musician for the first 12 years of my career.

I didn't go to college. So I mean, I went to college by correspondence in my late 20s and early 30s. Very different experience than almost anybody on this call.

And because I was traveling and I was playing in the Barcelona Symphony and playing the French horn for a living for a long time. And my favorite composer was Johannes Sebastian Bach. And you know Bach, maybe the greatest composer ever lived, 1685 to 1750 in the 65 years published for the 1000 pieces of music.

So productive. He also had 20 kids by the way, which you know, that's productive. And near the end of his life he was asked by a minor biographer who's been lost to posterity, the question, the entree, why do you write music? Not what's your writing process, you

know, that's the question that we'd all use today.

Or, you know, what, how do you do it man, with 20 kids? Now, why do you write music? And here was his answer. Bach said the aim and final end of all music is nothing less than the refreshment of the soul and the glorification of God. And I read that and I thought, can I say that? Can I say that as a French horn player? And the answer was no.

I left music in search of a way to answer Bach's question like that. I wanted to be that entrepreneur. I wanted to think, you know, here's the weirdest thing.

I became an economist from the sublime to the dismal, because I wanted to answer Bach's question this way. And these are the moments, these minor moments of lucidity that that and sometimes they're they're endogenous to your own particular experience. And sometimes they're exogenous to some crazy virus like we're seeing today.

But I didn't waste it then, thank God. And it led me to the kind of things that I do today. I mean, I'm no Bach, but I feel like I'm refreshing something maybe.

And I believe I'm serving God. All of us, I think, can try to answer that better and try to use the current moment to to examine our values and to answer our why. So good, so good.

I want to we're just going to go to student questions at this point and start getting more practical as well as I know some of the questions are very specifically like, what what should we do now and how do we think about that? So what I want to do, I mentioned this earlier for those who are on kind of right at the beginning, as we're doing things a kind of two-part way. One, we're going to answer some of your questions that have been uploaded and send those out to our guests. But two, we've invited five students from different universities actually to join us live.

And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to actually invite those students. You can join us now. Okay, let's go to student questions for our guests.

And I'd like to begin. Let me see, I'd like to begin with Elena. We've asked them to introduce themselves if we're asking their questions.

So, Elena, why don't you want to start? Hey, thanks so much for having all of us. So I'm a software at MIT studying business analytics and public policy. And I'm here with Ed Spiritist, the Christian Journal of Thought on campus, as well as in university.

Thank you again for your discussion before him. I look forward to the rest of it. My question is related to the cost of them, some of the measures we've put in place, some of the social distancing, and then like the stimulus bill that's just been passed.

So there have been a number of measures, again, put in place to protect us, to benefit

us. But as a generation that hasn't necessarily had as much of a say, but has obviously it's been done to protect us the most part, how are we supposed to think about bearing these costs? And again, they're not just financial, but also emotional, like mental as we are. Distance from one another, not able to experience a lot of us are with families.

But if we're separated from friends, other than just seeing other people in Zoom calls experiencing that, what does it look like for us to think about these costs, to prepare for them, the ones that we haven't faced yet, and to ultimately respond well? So for the sake of time, I'm going to direct the questions a little bit. Arthur, we talked a little about some of these trade-offs. Would you want to take this one? Sure.

It's a great question. And it's one that we kind of tipped around a little bit because it almost feels bad to suggest that we shouldn't do absolutely everything we can to stamp out the virus, to make sure that no lives are lost, to bear any burden and to pay any price. I get that, but it's not right to not ask these questions.

Why? Because in point of fact, if we don't have any economy, lives will be lost. People will be hurt. And it's the people at the margins of society.

It's the people at the periphery who pay as Alpha is pointing out. This is not the people who have a huge 401(k) or somebody who's got a huge amount of slush in their bank account. These are people with the smallest margins in life, actually, really people at the periphery.

So this is an important thing. It's also the young as people who are actually starting out. We necessarily are looking for some sort of a balance right now and haven't found it.

In most public policy crises, we tend to go rail to rail. And one of the things that would like us all to resist is figuring out who's to blame right now. I mean, the geopolitical circumstances will sort themselves out.

Right now, the typical algorithm is in play, where we start by under-reacting and then we tend to react very, very, very strongly, and then we bring it back into the middle. I strongly suspect that over the next few weeks, the calls will become more salient to a more aggressive opening of economic activity precisely because as the costs mount, we will see the asymmetry in the harm that people are bearing. I don't know exactly what form that's going to take, but I would be really shocked if by June, we aren't willing and able to actually take a little bit more risk than we currently are.

But it's not impolite for you to make this for you to ask this question. You actually should more people will, and I can assure you that as I talk to people in Capital Home in Washington, D.C., the chorus is growing louder of how can we take care of people who most need us and who most need economic opportunities that we're proposing on purpose right now. Thank you.

Mohsen, why don't we go to you? Hey, hey everybody, thank you so much for such an exciting thought-provoking discussion, and I could actually say that I feel a little bit better now after the discussion and after the hopeful messages. And I want to thank obviously the organizers for this awesome event and for inviting me. My name is Mahsa Zekayb, and I go to North Carolina State University, and I'm studying in Nuclear Engineering with Physics and Anthropology.

I'm also honored to be the President of the Muslim Student Association at NC State. And being a senior this year and slowly seeking into this abyss of senior writers at this point, I really hope my professors aren't on this call right now. This discussion really hits home because myself in a whole class of 2020 is walking into this perturbed economy.

And so my question is, due to everything that has happened with the economy, you know, due to the COVID-19 crisis, there's going to be a lot of repair that is needed both at the governmental level, and Elena mentioned some of those governmental measures that are being taken and will be taken, but also at the grassroots level. And as a Muslim, you know, service and helping your neighbor is a huge part of the Islamic tradition. And so I wanted to know what are some of the ways in which we can help at the individual level to alleviate this crisis.

And you know, taking that into account that we ourselves are coming into this, you know, whole nation of graduates are going into this particular economic landscape. Alfa, why don't we direct that one to you? I'd love your thoughts on that. Absolutely.

I think one of the things that is exciting to me about the ways in which people are responding on the ground, you know, from a grassroots perspective is that while the questions about what happens economically are there, the commitment to life is pretty astounding. You know, in many of the discussions that we've had as a community, everybody concludes by saying, but I would, you know, I would rather sacrifice than, you know, have somebody that I know or somebody who's more vulnerable end up, you know, being exposed and losing their life to this virus. And so I think that the sacrifice piece and the piece around mobilizing whatever resources we have, we are seeing a lot of people who are responding as volunteers, those who are, you know, younger and healthier to go do the things that seniors and those whose mobility issues really can't do.

So for, you know, I mean, when you think about the senior population, how many of them are able to get on Grubhub or seamless or any kind of grocery delivery service and have it actually arrive at their home? It's, you know, it's definitely, there is a huge need for, you know, volunteerism and for checking in and, you know, the isolation piece. I mean, just even making that call, that phone call, the phone calls that are needed to just say for those who are not even necessarily on Zoom, you know, Zoom pro accounts cost money. And as we've discovered, it's like one third of even our entrepreneurs don't necessarily have the technological, you know, resources to be able to participate in the

ways we do.

So there are many, many, many different ways. There's volunteering, there's online volunteerism, you know, I know there's a practice venture out there called VOMO, VOMO.org, which organizes volunteers. There's, you know, there are many ways online even to be able to give your time and your knowledge and know how, because a lot of us, I was saying a lot of what the rebuilding effort is going to require is going to be this mix of our kind of human scale, service-based, small businesses that need to be rebuilt with the trillions of dollars in the future that they can contribute to our economy and do currently contribute.

And then the ability to upgrade their technology, the ability to bring the innovation, the data, the ability to bring the communication savvy that we, you know, many, you know, younger individuals have access to and are just, you know, they're digital natives and we have a lot of analog businesses that will need support. And so I think there is the opportunities almost endless and I am a self-professed social entrepreneur and so all I see everywhere I turn as Arthur was saying is, oh my gosh, what an exciting opportunity. And I hope that there will be a movement towards more support for green core type activities.

I think we need to repair our, you know, watershed systems. We need to, you know, take on some of the repairing the planet work that needs to happen to. So I hope this is the reflective moment we've needed to really set sail for the kinds of opportunities that are plenty.

But we have to, like, unstructured data. I talk about unstructured work. Much of this is unstructured work.

So just even structuring the work itself is the work of a generation. That's super helpful. To take a popular question over here in the Q&A that's kind of popping up to the top, Andy, maybe directed to you for this one, kind of a more almost pastoral kind of type question.

What do we do if we feel paralyzed and overwhelmed by the suffering and hardship around us? If we don't know what we can possibly do kind of in such a huge situation. You know, what would you suggest to somebody? It made me a real simple question, but I'm actually been feeling that myself. I've had moments where I am in my kitchen and I feel like my knees buckle and I start getting tears in my eyes and I'm like, what just happened? Like, what is happening to me right now? And I can't make sense of it because it's like there's this.

I've had this feeling and in my life, I feel like, especially, I've had this leading up to this was the last 10 years of this river of sadness that's actually always been in my life for different reasons. And at least for me, what I did during that time was I really did turn to

the Bible. In my case, as a Christian, I really went to a lot of Christian songs and I actually spent a lot of time on my hands and knees praying and that I feel like actually a lot of that time doing that led to a place where even though I still have these things right now in this moment last week, actually just yesterday, where there are some just general practices that I develop that might be things that you might consider developing yourself, whatever those things might be.

And so people have, and I think all of us on the panel have different, either meditative practices, different start-the-day practices, different ways to actually help us be connected to something bigger than just the present feeling, the present moment, something that makes you believe that there is something that you believe is actually caring for this world that's much bigger than what any human leader actually has a capacity, any set of leaders, whether they get along or they don't have a capacity to figure out. And so I would say that that's, it's a hard thing because I know if you have to have done that, it can be a place where you might go, I don't believe that. It's a little bit like, I can't get there, but I have this other phrase that I oftentimes use.

People will tell you when Job Search counseling or parent-tale guidance is this concept of follow your passions and then you'll be happy. And I don't really like that phrase because a lot of times people are stuck because they don't know what they're passionate about. And a lot of people have different ideas to what passion really is defined as.

So people might say, well, I'm passionate about it, I'd be willing to get my life for it. I'd be willing to cut off my right arm for it. I need to actually be that excited about something.

That's a pretty high bar. I don't know if many people would actually say they could do all those things for any one thing. And so therefore, people get stuck.

They actually don't even move. And I use a different phrase, which is follow your interests to discover your passions. And in following those interests, you'll actually do some things that will actually help you know whether it was something you're excited about or whether you're not.

And actually, there's a lot of times that I tried things that I thought I would be excited about. And I'd get close enough to realize that's not it. Sometimes it was actually my whole job.

Sometimes it was a volunteer thing. Sometimes it was a role in a non-profit organization. But I had to do something to get out of sitting in my own head thinking that I could figure it out all on my own.

And so that's one of those things where I know right now we would say, well, because we actually can't get out of our homes, how do we do that? But what are we doing right

here? We're actually connecting, right? And that I had another friend of mine. He's a very successful venture capitalist who's now retired. He said, and so I teach an entrepreneurship class, he came to speak my class.

He said, he said, you guys are so fortunate. We all are. We have the ability right now through technology to actually have any person in the world to be our mentor.

It doesn't mean actually we have a personal relationship with them, but he gave an example for him of Warren Buffett as an investor. He said, I know everything Warren Buffett has ever actually written, published video, everything that's out there. I've read about it.

And I can actually tell you everything that I need to know about what Warren Buffett knows about investing. And I just did it by just learning. You have that.

You could actually, if you like any of us on this line, you could read everything Arthur wrote. I wish you did. You wrote a note and said, I read everything you wrote.

He said, I'd love to talk to you. And all of a sudden, you've got a person who you could be connected with like no other. I can tell you like every student who sends me a LinkedIn message where they actually send a nice note, which has a little compliment in it.

I do have an ego. I'm sorry to say, I don't accept it. And if they actually send it with no thing, and it just says connect, connect, connect, I don't accept it.

Because they couldn't take the three seconds to actually rate, say like, why they want to connect with me. You can do that. And then that's one way where I guess I would say, at least you get out of yourself and you think about how I could help another.

And you've heard that as a theme today, I think is that to the extent that every day you can do something where you think about someone who actually has a need, your parents, your grandparents, a sibling, a cousin, someone who actually needs a need and you reach out and you provide help for them, you will actually feel great, I think because you did that. But also you may going to most this question, you may discover there's actually a big need there that you could really feel that could actually turn into something that leads into teacher America, these into AmeriCorps, leads into something that we don't even know exists right now. But actually, that's the opportunity that I think that is there that there's so many young people today who actually hate institutions today for all the different reasons.

But one of the biggest ones is they don't want to work for anyone. They actually want to write their own culture. They want to write, put their own values in.

It's like, this is a moment to do that. Like everyone's starting at zero in a way. So it's like, gosh, if you have any ideas or any desire to actually pour your values as Arthur said into

something, give it a try.

What do you have to lose? Like there's no one else getting jobs, so we might as well try these cool things, whatever they might be. So that's one way you can take like whatever that dark place you're in. One is find those sort of spiritual practices, but also get outside yourself and find someone who you might be able to help and that may turn into something bigger and bigger.

Thank you. Great. Grace, why don't we go to you for your question? Sure.

Thank you guys for having me. Thank you for the discussion. I'm a junior at Vanderbilt, and I'm majoring in human organizational development and also violin performance.

And my question, I guess, is for Dr. Brooks, kind of what you were talking about at the very beginning about that kind of like end of skeleton versus exoskeleton of life and productivity and worship. And I was wondering if you could speak to that, maybe break that down a little more. And if you have any like tips for actually creating that end of skeleton of life and worship, and how do you know maybe when you've crossed that line into this exoskeleton? Yeah, sure.

Thanks. I appreciate that. It's great to walk from one musician to another.

That's a highly self-motivated profession, is classical music because you spend your life saying to yourself, I really should be practicing. You know, because you can never practice enough. And so that sort of discipline helps you to build the end of skeleton of a well-structured life at a time like this.

However, there's dangers to it. So I'll sort of take it into parts. The first is for a lot of people who are having a hard time and feel it loose ends.

The reason is because you're used to having an outside force tell you what to do when. You know, so you go to school at a particular time. You take classes on a particular schedule.

You watch a lecture. You have a certain time when you go to your precept. You go, then you go to dinner with your friends, etc, etc.

On Sunday morning, if you go to church, you go to church at a particular time. It's all program, right? So people who feel really, really loose ends, they've never been outside of that. They've had that scaffolding around their lives.

They need to actually remember that once that's taken away, you still have to do all these things. But you can manually recreate that in your own life. I'm going to show you something.

This is mine for today. The first thing that I do is I sit down at my desk, my makeshift

desk, in my makeshift home office. And I write down exactly what I'm going to do.

From the moment I sit down until the moment I'm going to go to bed. However, that doesn't mean that I'm going to work every single hour until I go to sleep. The biggest mistake that people make when they're trying to create the endoskeleton of their own schedule is that they basically plan to work 18 hours a day.

And that's a huge mistake because cognitively, that's an allostatic load that you can't bear. It's completely impossible. Furthermore, there's no boundaries between your life and your work.

I mean, literally, when you're at home, you can't leave your home. Then, you know, where's your office stop and where does your home start? It's all your kitchen after a certain point. And so the result of that is that we make this big mistake of letting everything bleed into everything else.

So on the structure that you're creating, you need to program non-work as well. The hour of exercise, the time of prayer. Seriously, when I'm going to stop, when I'm going to watch television, you got to program that in.

And if you let everything blend in everything else, I mean, if you're looking at the device all the time and you're reading email, your mind actually can't sort out what's working, what isn't. And you'll become less productive and less effective and less joyful and more frustrated as time goes by simply because you don't actually have these boundaries. So the skeleton has to be, I'm going to impose work, but I'm going to work when I'm supposed to work and I'm not going to work when I shouldn't be.

And all of the things that go into a balanced lifestyle and one's full of happiness and serves my values with my worship and my meditation and all these other practices that has to go into the schedule as well. We have to be a lot more structured than we've been in the past. And that's a big opportunity because then everybody can be like you and me, classical musicians.

Awesome. So we've got a ton of questions and same as last time when we had like 900, we got a ton of them. Why don't we try, we have about 10 minutes.

So we're going to see how fast we can go to try to get through some of these. I want to hit two more students. Raj, why don't you go next? And then Lauren, we'll hit you out for that.

Hi everyone. Thanks for the super great discussion. As you all have referenced, I'm Raj, good USC, I'm a sophomore, studying math and biology.

And I think this global pandemic has really forced a lot of us to look at alternative solutions for work and for school I mean from a practical perspective, although it's not

ideal, I think there are certain benefits to that as well. I know for me personally, I can attend my ADAM from my bed without having to get up and go anywhere. So I'm wondering, you know, after this is all over, what the effects will look like and whether this new online remote work will trickle into both businesses, schools and even socially.

But why don't we go to you maybe on that and see if we can't keep it pretty short to see if we can't take through a few more. Sure. I will, my, it's dangerous to make these predictions, but my prediction is that most likely a lot of this digital work will remain with us.

I think the trend was already towards that. It's just a lot cheaper. I mean, hopefully Veritas will have its forums in person again, because you know, we like humans and there is something being physically present with one another.

But I'm sure if we did the math and said, what's more expensive to hold an in person event or to do this and be able to have a conversation with a thousand people, you know, the math will favor, the economics will favor us doing this at home. There are arguments to be made to say, you know what, actually the fact that we're not all buzzing around and flying and, you know, all the fuel and everything else that the planet has been complaining about, you know, those are also reasons to say, hey, perhaps less human activity, lighter footprint, and more of this is what we need. But I think to Arthur's point, which I couldn't agree more with, in fact, I will just say that I have gone the fully embodied way where I have a bird feeder where my phone actually lives, you know, more the time, because I physically need to put it away, so it doesn't actually take me in.

So I would say that similar to the musicians that put their instruments that are, you know, magical or the magician that needs a wand, you know, places that wand in, like we need to put these magical tools away and draw a boundary between being fully embodied beings and having the tools to be able to do this. And this is why for young people who are looking to say what is our task as a generation, it is really like this is all us shaping the culture that we want. It is us saying we want more physical in-person things and we want more technology.

But the mathematics and the economics of it would say, I think this is not a one-time thing, this is here to stay. And we just had a mass universal experience, or semi universal experience for those of us who have the access to tech of going on, on, on, towards online work in this way. So I don't think it's going to go away.

But there are huge ramifications for mental health and redefining a new work culture, because this is a different way of working. Let me throw one kind of a 30 second question, wrap it around over here to Andy. This is an interesting question kind of pop up at the top in the Q&A.

Is it ethical for students to chase career aspirations during this time? I think it is. So

again, I think part of for people from a career standpoint, for a lot of people it might be just a question of survival. I have to actually get out there and earn some income.

And so I do think that it may not be, I mean, different people have different ideas as to like what kind of career you're talking about. But I do think that if you want to go out there, you might be willing to do a lot of different things from a work standpoint than you would have done three weeks ago, because you want to earn income and you want to get into the marketplace. That's the thing personally, your ability to actually get yourself ready to be engaged, to be professional, to actually develop the skills to use these online tools.

Actually, you could add value to a lot of organizations that they're all trying to figure out how to use these tools. And if you're really comfortable with them, you might teach people actually how to do this. They're going to be a whole business for how to teach people how to use online tools.

I love what all of us really emphasizing. There's a whole business for people who are marginalized and have lower incomes, who they, if you could give them access in a way that no one's ever given them access. I think the government would probably find a way to find a way to help support you to do that if you had enough ideas.

So I do think that in a way, this idea of how do we be not only career seeking, but entrepreneurly minded to sort of add value in the world, both to the world, but also to do ourselves. I think that's a great thing to do, because otherwise, I know I can only watch so much Netflix and I don't find that that's necessarily adding a whole lot to me. So I would say, yeah, I think it's totally ethical and super valuable, keep it in context.

Obviously, if you can also add to that time where you're helping other people in whatever way, shape, or form, I think that would be great. Makes a lot of sense. Lauren, let's head over to you for our last kind of live student question.

Hey guys, thank you so much for this. This has been incredibly helpful and illuminating in a lot of ways. My name is Lauren and I'm a senior at Harvard College studying English and history, and I am the editor in chief of the Harvard Icthes, which is our journal of Christian thought and expression.

I was struck by something that Arthur said earlier on in the panel, namely about how the economy, this is not going to last, right? We know that we're talking about a timeline of months instead of years, and so we also need to keep that sort of timeline in mind as we're going through this. But at the same time, even if after the pandemic, we're still going to feel the repercussions of this time. 9/11 changed the way that we fly.

I 2008 changed the way that we regulate banks. So I'm interested in thinking about how this is going to change the way we think about the American political economy, right?

And Alpha said something very interesting about tech, right? And how all of our jobs now are moving online, and particularly the companies that are based on telecommunication and the internet, they're the most robust at this point in time, which means that the big tech firms that everyone was already concerned about before the crisis are sort of using this time to grow even bigger. And this is people like Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, the kind of usual suspects that people have drawn parallels between today and the kind of new technological gilded age.

This is also coming at a time when inequalities in healthcare and employment access are being sort of laid bare for everyone to see. And as people are trying to understand whether liberals' democracies are actually at a disadvantage to more authoritarian states like China and handling something like a public health crisis. So I'm interested in asking how is this going to change our attitude toward the American system of capitalism, particularly the kind of laissez-faire type of capitalism that we've seen dominating markets for the past 10 years or so? Are there so? Yeah, I'm happy to take it.

I don't know the answer to that. I think that it's really easy for us to blame. It's interesting.

We talked about the idea that the Chinese system is better at handling something like this. Meanwhile, evidence is coming to life that they've been hiding the casualty count and that they covered up the extent of the crisis. And it was the transparent Western European and American economies, which are really suffering a lot and are kind of chaotic that are dealing with this in a much much more transparent way.

I don't know. It's going to all shake out whether or not it's going to re-down to the credit of more open societies like we had today and how it's actually going to change our political economy, whether or not the idea of a robust pre-enterprise system coming largely to the rescue, providing the things that we actually need in our public health system and indeed providing the vaccines to the world. Whether or not that will be the salient theme of this or whether or not the idea that we weren't just not able to get our act together because we're in this big, messy, not very compliant, non-super-authoritarian system, whether or not that that will be the theme.

I actually think that at the end of the day, we're going to have a lot to be sorry about, but a lot to be proud of as well being a largely open society based on democratic values and for enterprise values as well. It's not perfect, but I think that we're going to see as the best of the most imperfect alternatives and the circumstances. Can it be better for sure? We're going to find new and better ways within the structure of public policy and capitalism to push capitalism to the margins better than it has been in the past because this is as alpha has been emphasizing uncovering these inequities in the level of exposure that we have to this kind of crisis and we need to fix that, but that's exactly what we're always trying to do is not to make less capitalism but better capitalism.

I have to say I'm not optimistic because optimism says it's going to be okay, but I'm hopeful because hope as a theological virtue is really, really robust. The idea that something can be done and we can do something about it, there is nothing more hopeful than the idea of democratic capitalism to deal with these types of problems. We just have to stay in the hunt.

We have to be the agents of that particular change. We can't allow the idea that an authoritarian system is somehow better for dealing with this to take over as the new narrative, whether it's on one political poll or the other. I think we all have to come out of this determined to work together within the context of an open society, with an open economy, and determine never to let this happen again in a way that has while protecting the people at the margins of our society who are being disproportionately hurt.

I think we can do it. Wow. Unfortunately, we are going to have to end there as painful as that is.

It's kind of a huge conversation and it's just beginning and it's when we're going to be having for months and years. So let me at this point just thank our guests, our panelists, Andy, Arthur. Thank you so much for your time.

It has meant a ton for you to be here with us and just sharing as transparently as you have. So thank you. Thank you.

And I also love to thank our students. You guys have been awesome and thank you for joining us and asking your questions and just jumping right in. So we are looking forward to how this whole conversation will advance.

But let me just say thank you to all of you for joining us this afternoon. Thank you for having us. If you like this and you want to hear more, like, share, review, and subscribe to this podcast.

And from all of us here at the Veritas Forum, thank you.