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Tell Your Story Newsletter (TYSN):

Specializing in Entrepreneurial and Organizational Storytelling

Let me tell your story!

Welcome Mid-April, 2020!

The last, roughly two weeks of unseasonably cold temperatures in Saskatchewan have made social isolation even more challenging.

But, the answer, as writers and regular walkers Wilf Popoff and Daphne Gray Grant have said, is to keep moving, regardless. Our brains (and bodies) feel the difference!

When not walking, I have been reading and thinking about political leadership in Covid-19 times. In particular, inspiring women leaders have responded more successfully than many of today's authoritarian male leaders (e.g. Trump, Netanyahu) who dominate the international press. I discuss these women's leadership in article one.

In Storytellers' Corner, I turn to Samantha Enslin, a writer for the "Grammar Girl" website, who answers the question: "What is an 'eggcorn,' anyway?"

April, especially after Easter, is typically a cheerful month with much sunshine and warmth. However, with the snow and cold wind of the past week, many of us are feeling less cheerful. One factor in our favour is the lengthening of the daylight hours: This issue of TYSN points to hope for life after the security measures are released, challenges notwithstanding.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

**Principal
Storytelling Communications**

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Article One: On democratic women leaders in a Covid-19 world: signs of truth, decisiveness, technology, even love, in their leadership

These days, the news arising from the coronavirus is dark. In Canada, our economy is predicted to emerge, after the peak of infection has been reached, in a deep recession, if not a depression. Economists say that we face an economy that may be worse than the one following the Second World War; they forecast that “at least three years” will be required for any rebound to begin.

More than one million Canadians have lost their jobs, many businesses will never re-open, and the values of investment and oil prices have fallen dramatically, so that entrepreneurs and business owners face a radically different global marketplace than what we knew, just five short weeks ago.

It would be **tone-deaf** to drone on about marketing and communications issues when we face this gaping wound. Many of my services as a communications and marketing consultant may not be deemed “essential.” (And yet I look forward to attending webinars by Dan Gold and Jill Sauter on "crisis communications," later this week.)

While most of us try to avoid the doom and gloom of financial pundits (“We get what we repeat,” Seth Godin says), we are still responsible for staying informed about the realities of this pandemic.

And writing that pursues areas of **hope** for our global communities is more needed than ever.

For that reason, I discuss a recent article in *Forbes* magazine, where journalist Avivah Wittenberg-Cox observes that political strongmen in the world— Trump, Bolsonaro (Brazil), Obrador (Mexico), Modi (India), Duterte (Phillippines), Orban (Hungary), Putin (Russia) and Netanyahu (Israel)—have exploited the Covid-19 crisis to their own selfish ends. They “accelerate a terrifying trifecta of authoritarianism: blame ‘others,’ capture-the-judiciary, demonize the journalists, and thereby blanket their countries in I-will-never-retire darkness.”

This is not a new story to most readers but tends to reduce many of us to anger and/or grief. In the face of these so-called leaders, why bother to fight, some folks may wonder, to return to economically prudent, socially progressive democracies?

And yet as Wittenberg-Cox argues, we can find hope in reading that amid the Covid-19 crisis, **countries** (especially in Europe) with the **best responses are led by women**.

Only about five percent of Fortune 500 companies are led by female CEOs and, in Canada, women have been shut out of the leadership of our provinces and territories (except for Caroline Cochrane in the NWT). Trudeau's placing women in prominent portfolios in the Federal Cabinet (although not without difficulty) has made a difference. In Europe, in particular, female politicians are leading the way out of the greatest health and economic crisis since the 1940s.

Germany's Angela Merkel *honestly* identified the coronavirus as a "serious" problem that would infect up to 70% of the population. She began testing early, refusing the phases of denial, anger and disingenuousness shown in other countries, so that, at **2,673** deaths, German's losses number far below the rest of Europe and they may be able to loosen restrictions "relatively soon."

Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen was one of the earliest and quickest responders, identifying Covid-19 *truthfully* and introducing 124 measures to block the spread last January. As a result, she has not had to legislate the lockdowns used in other countries. Wittenberg-Cox reports that Ing-wen has sent 10 million face masks to the US and Europe, and still reports only **six deaths** in Taiwan, since the outbreak began. She is a non-European woman leader whose **decisiveness** matters.

New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern **decisively** imposed a lockdown on her country early and similarly imposed self-isolation on those entering the country when there were only six cases. She shortly after banned foreigners from entering New Zealand, to contain the spread. Arden has strived to be *truthful and clear* with the public on why a high level of alert was required, with the result that only **four deaths** have occurred. Whereas other countries move to reopen their economies, Ardern adds to the restrictions, and enforces a quarantine in designated areas for 14 days for all returning Kiwis.

While most Western countries have limited testing for people with active symptoms, Iceland's Katrín Jakobsdóttir has offered the *technology* of free coronavirus testing to all citizens, to learn the true nature of the spread and the fatality rates. By screening five times as many people as South Korea has, Jakobsdottir has prevented a nation-wide lockdown and the need to close schools and universities. She has seen only **eight deaths** come to Iceland.

Finland's Sanna Marin, a millennial, has used *social media technology and influencers* to spread accurate news of the crisis, recognizing that not everyone reads mainstream media, and harnessing the power of "fact-based information" to contain the virus. Only **49 deaths** have been incurred.

Norway's Erna Solberg has seen only **98 deaths**. Solberg has innovated by leading with what Wittenberg-Cox says is simply "*love*": Solberg has used television to talk to Norwegian children, responding to their questions and allowing for them to express their fears and uncertainties.

Denmark's Mette Frederiksen developed short, three-minute press conferences to relay her leadership's *accountability* to the public. (Justin Trudeau has followed, with a lengthier version.) Only **260 deaths** have been incurred in her country.

Sceptics will argue that these are small countries ("islands"), but as Wittenberg-Cox suggests, "Germany is large and leading, and the UK [by contrast] is an island with very different outcomes." Boris Johnson has succeeded in recovering from the virus better than many of his countryfolk.

So what do these women leaders show in their "alternative" methods of "wielding power?"

They govern with values that matter: Truth. Decisiveness. Technology. Love. Accountability.

Showing "empathy and care" for their electorate, these women have led and communicated in ways vastly different than their authoritarian male counterparts.

Consider the political posturing of leaders of the US and the lack of reliable death statistics from there (1,472), and from countries with other, undemocratic leadership, such as Brazil (105), Mexico (23), India (27), Philippines (18), Hungary (10), Russia (18) and Israel (13). Truthfulness, decisiveness, adoption of technology, empathy or love and accountability for the electorate are remarkably lacking from these men's leadership. None has contained the viral infection in their countries, so that the Covid-19 death-toll is far more staggering than these politicians acknowledge.

In entrepreneurial and business settings, women's leadership styles have been discussed as potentially more progressive and adaptive than men's. Wittenberg-Cox reminds us that many companies and political institutions expect women "to behave as men do," if they want to succeed. But signs show that authoritarian men should instead learn from their democratic female counterparts.

It's past due that we recognize this and the life-altering implications for our global communities.

And now it's your turn: How have you incorporated the values shown by these women leaders, in your response to Covid-19, and/or in other areas? Please share; I'd be delighted to hear from you.

STORYTELLER'S CORNER

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This month: Wordsmithing with Samantha Enslin: What is an "eggcorn? "

Earlier this month, Samantha Enslin (a writer for the "GrammarGirl" podcast) observed the confusion some Americans suffer between the term "**Marshall Law**" (referring to George C. Marshall, the US chief of staff during World War Two and mastermind behind the Marshall Plan

for post-war aid) and "**Martial Law**" (when rule of law is enforced by the military, not local police, due to a state emergency).

The confusion is, in Enslin's words, " a great example of an **eggcorn**," where people replace the right word with a wrong word that sounds the same (i.e. like a pun) and which "makes logical sense in its place."

The term "eggcorn" was coined by linguist Geoffrey Pullum in 2003 and was inspired by someone mistaking an '**acorn**'--the nut from an oak tree--as an '**eggcorn**.' Enslin notes that there is sense behind the mistake, "if you think of an egg as something that grows into a bigger organism" ("Quick and Dirty Tips"; April 2, 2020).

What other "eggcorns" are out there? Enslin cites "for all intensive purposes" for "for all intents and purposes"; and "old-timer's disease" for "Alzheimer's disease." Others are "day-today" instead of "day-to-day"; and "all over sudden" instead of "all of a sudden."

New speakers of English whom I've met often confuse "high hills" for "high heels" and "doggy dog" for "dog-eat-dog" and so on.

Have you (or someone you know) ever used an "eggcorn" by mistake? Please share these amusing errors on my "contact" page; I'd be delighted to hear from you!

SHOP NEWS:



It's with a heavy heart that I write that award-winning Humboldt watercolourist and entrepreneurial mentor to many, [Bob Pitzel](#), has died at the age of 71.

Bob's last scan (in the late winter) showed another cancerous tumour, following months of intensive treatment that he could no longer sustain.

All of us who benefited from Bob's generosity and support are heartbroken. Words simply fail. We already miss his stories.

I will always remember, in my mind's eye, Bob quietly navigating the backroads of rural Saskatchewan, seeking subjects for his painting.

Deepest condolences go to Bob's partner, Maureen Doetzel, who has been a tireless caregiver for many months.

Proteges like me will miss Bob's sense of humour and his laid back, common sense approach to entrepreneurship.

Bob understood the challenges of doing creative work on the Prairies like no one else: Rest in Peace, dear friend.

Like all (or many) of you, who read this issue of TYSN in the context of this pandemic, I passed the Easter weekend in a very subdued way, speaking to family electronically and doing all I could to help to "flatten the curve" of Covid-19. But I hope that the sunshine brought some joy to the season for you.

While I have been impressed by how well grocery stores execute safe measures for staff and customers, I have been uneasy to find some fellow customers to be reckless! I hope you're joining me in barking at those who disregard the "two metre" physical distancing rule, when reaching for disinfectant wipes or toilet paper. (Shouting may actually be necessary, if we're wearing face masks--haha!)

ABOUT US:

Between 2011 and December 2018, Elizabeth Shih Communications chronicled the stories of B2B marketing and communications on the Prairies and across the country.

Effective January 1, 2019, I rebranded as "Storytelling Communications." I now help Canadian newcomers land their first or better jobs; I assist small- and medium-sized businesses to close more sales by communicating more effectively; and I write the legacy stories of major companies.

Interested in learning more? Please contact me through my CASL-compliant website (www.storytellingcommunications.ca)

After I receive your message, I'll be pleased to discuss projects with you!

Please visit my website for more information (www.storytellingcommunications.ca).