



Fear of deconfinement

We are now arriving at the moment we have been waiting for since the beginning of containment: the deconfinement. But will it mean the sense of freedom that we have all been waiting for?

In order to answer this question and to know how best to approach this stage of deconfinement with a certain serenity, it is important to go back over the means that have been implemented to comply with the confinement and the stages of adaptation that we have gone through.

How were we conditioned to the lockdown?

Let us recall that the lockdown was imposed on the population in order to avoid overcrowding of health care and particularly intensive care by patients suffering from an aggressive form of Covid-19, the majority of them being part of the older part of the population.

The impulse used to condition people has been fear, whether voluntary or involuntary. This is of crucial importance for this new stage ahead of us. On a daily basis, we have seen the count of the sick, the dead, the number of people in hospital and in intensive care. This initial count was done without the people who were cured or discharged from hospital and then this was added.

Newspapers talking only about that: no vaccine, no officially effective treatment, arguments about the pros and cons of the treatments put forward by some and others, no more contacts because that could be too dangerous, depression within elderly people, being locked up at home because it is safer for oneself and others... others are a danger, we are too...

Then the goal is reached, we can start the deconfinement...but a variable has settled in many of us all in a more or less important way: fear. It is so ingrained in the brain that it will hinder a serene and reasonable deconfinement.

The stages we have gone through during this period of confinement

The psychologist, D Haikins, has identified 3 steps that we've gone through:

Step 1: The survival phase

We learn the start of containment measures. These imply a drastic restriction of our individual liberties and a bursting of our structural landmarks. We are bombarded with continuous, often contradictory information that only fuels a wind of panic and plunges us into a "survival" mode.

Emotionally, there is a surge of anxiety (fear of anticipation), frustration, anger and sometimes even a sense of despair at the collapse of everything we have built up over the years.



It's the generalized mayhem, the disorderly rush for toilet paper, the fights in supermarkets to tear out a packet of flour. The pressure is maximum and we must urgently manage the occupation of our children, the marital and family tasks and duties. We are powerless and dumbfounded by the brutal deconstruction of our lifestyles.

Step 2: The secure phase

We all are beginning to establish new ways of operating and to restructure the organisation of our daily lives. This is how new points of reference are born, which allow us to gradually leave our survival mode and respond to our need to feel safe again. "Stay home," we are hammered. Each in his own way, rebuilds his new landmarks and sets his own objectives to better manage his space and time. It's time to tidy up the cupboards and the attic, for a daily jog.

We find a better balance to occupy our children between their learning needs at school and their leisure time. We are gradually adapting to the reality of telecommuting and students are taking courses at a distance. We set up rituals that give us structure and reassurance: our morning gym or yoga class, the applause for the nurses at 8:00 pm, the virtual aperitif, the videoconference with our parents and loved ones.

Some people gradually calm down, stabilize and sometimes even feel a psychological windfall from the confinement. Others, more psychologically fragile at the base, continue to be engulfed in a deep emotional malaise. The basic anxious person becomes hyper-anxious, the basic impulsive person becomes aggressive and the basic depressed person becomes depressed. Those who cannot bear to be answerable to any authority continue to brave the prohibitions and the fines rain down.

Political communication remains chaotic and often contradictory.

Step 3: Habituation phase

Our lives are increasingly structured and we are demonstrating that we have significant coping skills. We are becoming more efficient and are increasingly able to clarify our professional and personal lives.

We observe with more emotional distance the new societal issues and become aware that many things will never be the same again ...

Emotionally, the need to hug our loved ones and friends is getting longer and longer... We have the physical need to touch ourselves, to feel close to trigger oxytocin, that wonderful attachment hormone that fills our hearts with love and joy.

Fear of deconfinement



According to him, with the deconfinement, the next 2 steps could be regained "freedom to be" and resilience.

But in reality, the fear that is firmly entrenched in each of us, more or less strongly, will block the first of these 2 stages.

We have just gone through 7 weeks where the exits were controlled, with masks/gloves for some, safety distance, being careful what to touch, all this to protect ourselves and others from the virus because there was danger and now suddenly as if by magic, we can go out, there is no more danger if we respect certain rules. But our mind can't believe it, it's engraved how bad everything was, the dangers, the insecurity and created « le syndrome de la cabane ».

The symptoms of this syndrome are fatigue, numbness in the legs and arms, long naps or difficulty getting up in the morning. The cabin syndrome also manifests itself in feelings of sadness, fear, anxiety or frustration...in short, you don't want to leave your home.

Post-traumatic stress can develop and in this case, don't hesitate to consult a doctor to get rid of it.

In relation to this latent fear, individuals will react more or less strongly: from the sensation of a small disturbing pebble in the shoe to the refusal to leave the house and to let the children go out for fear that something will happen.

There will also be those 20% of people who from the beginning did not care about the situation and who will continue to do the same without this feeling of fear.

How can we calmly and reasonably deconflict ourselves with the fear that something might happen?

The first thing is to distance yourself from the continuous flow of information that will continue to feed fear. Why is that? Because experts fear that people will do anything and the virus will rise again. So the message remains that a return to normality will only come after many months and still not sure, that the danger is there, that we should not rejoice, that we will never have the same life again...which blocks us in a paradox of wanting to live and being afraid to live.

We must therefore do things calmly, with a lot of encouragement, patience, prudence and little by little the world will start again, better or worse ... but it will turn around, and we will get our lives back.

We must not let fear block our progress, especially for the children who need a return to normal even more than we do. Hell is paved with good intentions and locking up children to protect them is one of them.

It is necessary to go step by step to relearn how to live our lives: to resume real social contacts by respecting the safety distance and washing our hands, not to go out when we are sick, to go to the shops when it is necessary not to only look after ourselves, to respect the rules asked for in these same shops... But if you think about it, these famous rules are normal and not extraordinary. You don't stick to strangers out of respect for their private bubble, you don't cough/stun people's heads,

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washing your hands is a must for ALL germs and you stay home when you are sick. So what we are asked to do is generally normal.

It is important to seek help if we feel that we are handicapped by this fear of deconfinement, if we feel traumatized by what we have just gone through so that we can move forward, not waiting too long. This is also important to preserve children and allow them to resume a more normal life without the fears of adults. Let's not forget that children are like sponges and that they perceive what we feel.

If we manage to approach this deconfinement serenely, we will reach the last stage, that of resilience, that is to say the deep reconstruction after the crossing of trials