

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

Alison asks: Will this pandemic ever end?

04/02/21 / Keyword: pandemic

We're all so glad 2020 is over, but will the vaccine bring this pandemic under control as promised? ECP coach Alison has been reading about some predictions for the next few years.



Jasmin Chew @majestical_jasmin on Unsplash.

It's a year since the coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 was identified by Chinese scientists as the source of a new, lethal respiratory illness. In that time, more than 1.5 million people have died globally, economies worldwide have shut down multiple times, and whole societies have isolated in their homes and watched holidays pass without the closeness of family and friends. This continues to be a sad and difficult time for most.

However, Yale professor and social epidemiologist Dr Nicholas Christakis sees **a glimmer of hope** in all of this: "What's happening to us may seem to so many people to be alien and unnatural, but plagues are not new to our species – they're just new to us," says Christakis, expert on how our behaviours influence contagion in society. The good news, as his observations of disease over millennia suggest, is quite simply that plagues and pandemics end. They always end. They ended even before we had vaccines to respond to them. And how we react to these germs – through social distancing for example – determines the force with which they hit our society. Furthermore, while distributing these vaccines over the coming year will be one of the greatest public health challenges of our time, it will also represent one of **humankind's** many great achievements.

If we can vaccinate a sufficient portion of the population (roughly 75% according to some estimates), we will bring the pandemic

under control much earlier and with fewer deaths than if it had ended on its own.

"During epidemics, you get increases in religiosity, people become more **abstentious**; they save money, they get **risk averse**, and we're seeing all of that now, just as we have for hundreds of years during epidemics," says Christakis. He also underlines the fact that "economies collapsed **even** in ancient times when plagues happened, **even** when there was no government saying 'close the schools' and 'close the restaurants'."

However, "in 2024, all of those pandemic **trends** will be reversed," he says. The vision he describes for 2024 and **beyond** is one filled with experiences that were **longed for** in isolation: packed stadiums, crowded nightclubs and flourishing arts. "People will **relentlessly** seek out social interactions." What's more, this could include "sexual **licentiousness**", liberal

Useful vocabulary

a glimmer of hope: a weak sign of hope

humankind: the human race

abstentious: not consuming a lot

risk averse: opposed to taking risks

even: also, including

trend: tendency

beyond: afterwards

longed for: strongly desired or missed

relentlessly: with great determination

licentiousness:

inappropriateness, lack of control

threat: imminent danger

Let's chat about that!

1. What do you expect to happen in 2021?
2. Do you think the pandemic has brought people closer together?
3. What do you know about the 'roaring 20s'?
4. Do you think closing bars and restaurants is a good move? Why (not)?
5. What does Christakis say about the economy? Do you agree with him?

LIVE! English Events

Come and socialise in English!

Coffee Saturdays

1st Saturday 11:00

3rd Oct ✓
7th Nov ✓
5th Dec ✓
9th Jan ✓

6th Feb

6th Mar
Not in April
8th May
5th Jun

Cinema Nights

Last Friday 19:30

30th Oct ✓
27th Nov ✓
Not in Dec ✓
29th Jan ✓

26th Feb

26th Mar
30th April
28th May
25th Jun



An ECP LIVE! English event

Coffee Saturdays

This Saturday 6th February starting at 11:00!

FIND THE WORDS!

alcohol
antibodies
asymptomatic
curfew
disease
distancing
epidemic
gel
incubation
isolation

lockdown
mask
outbreak
pandemic
quarantine
remote working
restriction
soap
symptom
test
vaccine
virus



spending, and a “reverse of religiosity”. He predicts we will witness a second “roaring 20s”, just as after the 1918 flu pandemic.

Needless to say, there is still work to be done. The coming year will test the world’s endurance in continuing to social distance, hand-wash, wear masks and avoid crowds.

“Our world has changed; there’s a new deadly pathogen that is circulating. We’re not the first people that have had to face this **threat**, and a lot will be asked of us,” concludes Christakis. “And we’re just going to have to be grown up about it.”

Adapted from theguardian.com

by ECP coach Alison Keable



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