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## **Year End COVID AND Notes: Misery, Mourning and Types of Vaccine**

The surge has become a [veritable flood](#). At least half of my patients these days have a COVID related symptom and/or are living with the after-effects of this new disease.

I balance several thoughts simultaneously these days as we experience festivals of lights in several traditions, deeply appreciate family time, and face the closure of a very dark year with [completely avoidable](#) suffering. I regularly check up on the many patients who are still suffering from long term complications such as the young man in his 20s who gets winded whenever he walks up a flight of stairs. Most importantly, in the coming days I will call the families of my patients who have died this year. I knew these patients for decades. Calling families reminds me of my own good fortune – both of my 2 adult children and daughter in law live next door (they temporarily moved here from Boston and NYC).

I also look to the future as I begin to have vaccine related conversations with patients such as the 911 dispatcher. I respond by calmly addressing his concerns and point to the fact that on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 345 pm I gratefully received the vaccine (feel free to email me with your questions!).

I view these intimate and, often, emotionally intense human interactions through my health professional lens. This perspective motivates me as I continue my work with Israelis and Palestinians via [Healing Across the Divides](#). Many of you attended the webinar that Don Berwick moderated featuring two forthcoming books – one on peace building through health by myself and the other, by Len Rubenstein, formerly director of Physicians for Human Rights – USA, sadly documenting the increasing attacks against health professionals throughout the world. The webinar link is below at the end.

While the work of Ask Nurses and Doctors continues, I am stepping back to evaluate the work. I did engage in the Georgia races via [this op-ed](#) that The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published last Friday by Jeff Lerner and I (If unable to access the article due to the paywall, I can email it). The bottom line: “But now is the moment for every health professional to widely distribute the ‘political vaccine’ against unreliable health information on the frontline because it is a duty both for ourselves and our patients.”

Virtually all mass human catastrophes such as the Holocaust that my parents went through are avoidable and the COVID pandemic is sadly no exception. I never make predictions, especially these days. I do know that by working together in the coming year we will be able to improve more lives than working alone. I hope to do that with many of you in the coming year. I hope to do it in person.

Norbert

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Ask Nurses and Doctors

Webinar Recording featuring Don Berwick Len Rubenstein and myself.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/HZg4ijvk9f-MUPw7PN2BJp1ZXCQQcdY\\_ryzN7IBGXpwxTc3NRKsYre7hhJD7-FU1.qIAjNZ8tot9-qfbz](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/HZg4ijvk9f-MUPw7PN2BJp1ZXCQQcdY_ryzN7IBGXpwxTc3NRKsYre7hhJD7-FU1.qIAjNZ8tot9-qfbz) Passcode: ?ta9A\*Wa