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Expect Less.

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“Many of these cases stem from people taking risks that are, frankly, not appropriate.” — Barbara Ferrer, Public Health Director

With record numbers of new coronavirus cases in the United States and abroad, the short-term outlook for the pandemic is worsening by the day.

And that’s making some people angry.

They think that our near-ubiquitous awareness of COVID-19 and of the precautions needed to prevent its spread should at the very least motivate us to change our behaviors to avoid the virus like the plague.

But that’s not how humans work.

The way humans work is by shrugging off dangers and trying to live with things.

Take Florida, for example. It was hit by category 4 and 5 hurricanes in each of 2017, 2018 and 2019, and during that period the state’s population, counter-intuitively, increased by 500,000 people.

Five hundred thousand people saw Florida get ravaged by hurricanes three years in a row and thought to themselves, *“that’s where I wanna live.”*

And it’s not just Florida.

Kansas gets hit by some 96 tornadoes a year. In 1955, a single tornado killed 80 people in a small town called Udall. In 1950, five years before the tornado, Udall had a population of 410. In 1960, five years after its population dropped to 330 as a result of the tornado, Udall somehow had a population of 600.

Eighty people were killed by a tornado in Udall, and the town *grew* by 82%.

Two hundred seventy people watched 80 people DIE BY TORNADO and thought to themselves, "*this'll be fine.*"

And it's not just current and past Americans.

Pompeii was built on a lava plateau created by earlier eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, and writers at the time described the volcano as being active and as spitting fire and lava onto neighboring fields. And instead of abandoning the city built atop irrefutable evidence of previous eruptions at the foot of the *active volcano*, people *flocked* to it. It flourished.

Twelve thousand Pompeians saw Mount Vesuvius spitting fire and lava onto the older, drier lava at their feet and thought to themselves, "*what am I gonna do, NOT live here?*"

So people shouldn't get angry.

Expecting individuals to take precautions because of COVID-19 is unrealistic. That's not how we operate. It's never been how we've operated.

We shrug off dangers. Pretend things are OK. No matter how bad they get.

And if history's a guide, we don't just shrug off dangers, we seek them.

Consider that 40% of individuals in relationships stay in touch with their ex.

That's a *staggering* number.

And if that many of us feel confident enough to think we can

juggle current and former flames simultaneously — in spite of the obvious peril it entails — little wonder we feel invincible when facing hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanoes, and viruses.

Hubris, after all, is our defining characteristic.

That, and stupidity.