

First they took Tempo, and now everything is off beat

 By [Howard Feldman](#)

22 Jul 2020

First they came for the Tempo, and I did not speak out - because I wasn't crazy about Tempo. Then they came for the Lay's Salt and Vinegar chips, and I did not speak out - because I was always more of a "Lightly Salted" man. Then they came for the alcohol, and I did not speak out - because I had stockpiled an impressive amount of single-malts, along with toilet paper and sanitary wipes. Then they [came for Chocolate Log](#) - and I was too drunk to speak.



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These slightly adapted, but immortal words, were penned in 1946 by the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller (1892–1984). He chose, of course, to write about the cowardice of German intellectuals and certain clergy during the horrors of the Second World War.

And whereas, to be fair, Niemoller might have used the word “Socialist” where I referred to Tempo, his point is still well made. He might have used “Trade Unionist” and “Jew” where I employed the words “Alcohol” and “Lays Salt and Vinegar,” which indicates more than anything that he was clearly ahead of his time.

2020 is not 1946, and indeed the discontinuation of Chocolate Log is by no means comparable to the holocaust, but it remains true to say that if we don't speak out, then who can guess what will be next.



Nestlé discontinues Chocolate Log

15 Jul 2020



Loss and expectation

A conversation with psychologist David Abrahamsohn on my morning show reframed my perspective about 2020. Although the slot is not meant to be used for personal therapy, I often, completely inappropriately, use the time to deal with some of my “stuff”. In one such discussion I complained openly about my 15-year-old daughter who is not finding lockdown particularly easy.

That is a euphemism for she is bordering on impossible and if I could re-home her, I might well consider it. In my conversation with the psychologist in private practice, I did the whole “why can’t she see how blessed she is” thing, which is when he introduced me to the concept of loss around the expectation and of what the year was meant to bring.



It would be a grave mistake to order your coffin too late

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He explained that as a result of the pandemic our children have suffered significant loss. Each school year brings excitement of something unique to that particular year. Seven months into the year it is now clear that there will be no matric dances, no sports tours and no social interaction of any sort. Instead they have been asked to stay home and gain knowledge, without the outlet they have been used to.

And when some have returned to school, they have entered an environment that looks nothing like that place that they once knew. To negate or ignore that loss, is to be deaf to a significant sacrifice of their youth. They will never be able to experience what they had anticipated for the year that is fast diminishing. And that is pretty sad.

Emotional stability at risk

The Covid pandemic has resulted in loss on many levels. The loss of life, health, finance and experience has been significant. There is also little doubt that our emotional stability is more at risk than ever before, and one needs to spend limited amount of time on social media to see how fragile we are.

Take for example the massive negative outcry against Clover for changing the colour of their milk containers to blue. South Africans are fuming and considering a statement from Clover that it is “too early to see the impact on sales”, this was clearly not predicted by the company. In response to the outcry they also tweeted: “Is it too late to say April’s Fools?” and “We blame 2020.” Clearly they were more than a little surprised by the response.



Is Clover committed to being better in every way? I don't think so

Melissa Baird 15 Jul 2020



In reality though, it should not have been much of a shock given the amount of change that has already occurred over the past few months. South Africans clearly need their milk to be as it always was. They need it to be stable and reliably white. Not blue. Not green. Not anything other than that which it always was. It is not a metaphor for anything to do with colour. It is about being able to count on something, when so little has remained the same.

Which is why we react so strongly when Nestlé announces the death of Chocolate Log, even if we haven't eaten one since 1998. It is why we mourn the discontinuation of Salt and Vinegar Lay's chips and it's why blue milk cartons make us angry. It's certainly not 1946, but surely we have suffered enough.

ABOUT HOWARD FELDMAN

Howard Feldman is one of SA's leading entrepreneurs and Head of Marketing & People at Synthesis. His experience is global and extensive, spanning more than 20 years of working as a businessman, philanthropist and social commentator. Feldman was the chairperson of the Board of the South African Jewish Report, the only weekly Jewish newspaper in Africa, and he is a global keynote speaker, business strategist, author and morning drive show host.

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