

COVID-19 And The Death Of The Handshake

By Tony Lombardo

COVID-19 has resulted in countless losses. Obviously, the greatest loss is the agonizingly painful loss of life. For me, the one loss that has pretty much “gone under the radar” is The Death Of The Handshake.

My Mom and Dad migrated to America from Castellammare del Golfo, Sicily and settled in Brooklyn. We never spoke English at home...only the "Castellammarese Dialect." Mom was “OK” with English. Dad would “butcher” the language.

When I was a kid, I'd go out with Dad and meet people who only spoke English. Dad would greet them with a smile and say, “*Allo, my name iza Vincenzo.*” He would immediately offer his “Patented Vincenzo Handshake” and make eye-contact as part of the greeting. As a child, I noted that his approach would invariably place “The Recipient” in a very comfortable place. I was impressed.

I placed Dad's handshake “methodology” into my life. His method has served me well especially when it comes to meeting complete strangers. Hence, I passed Dad's handshake and eye-contact skills to my children.

Fast forward. Along comes COVID-19. Now we offer “substitutes” for handshakes such as a nod and a smile, a “dip” or a Namaste...I might add are all poor substitutes. VIVA LA HANDSHAKE!!