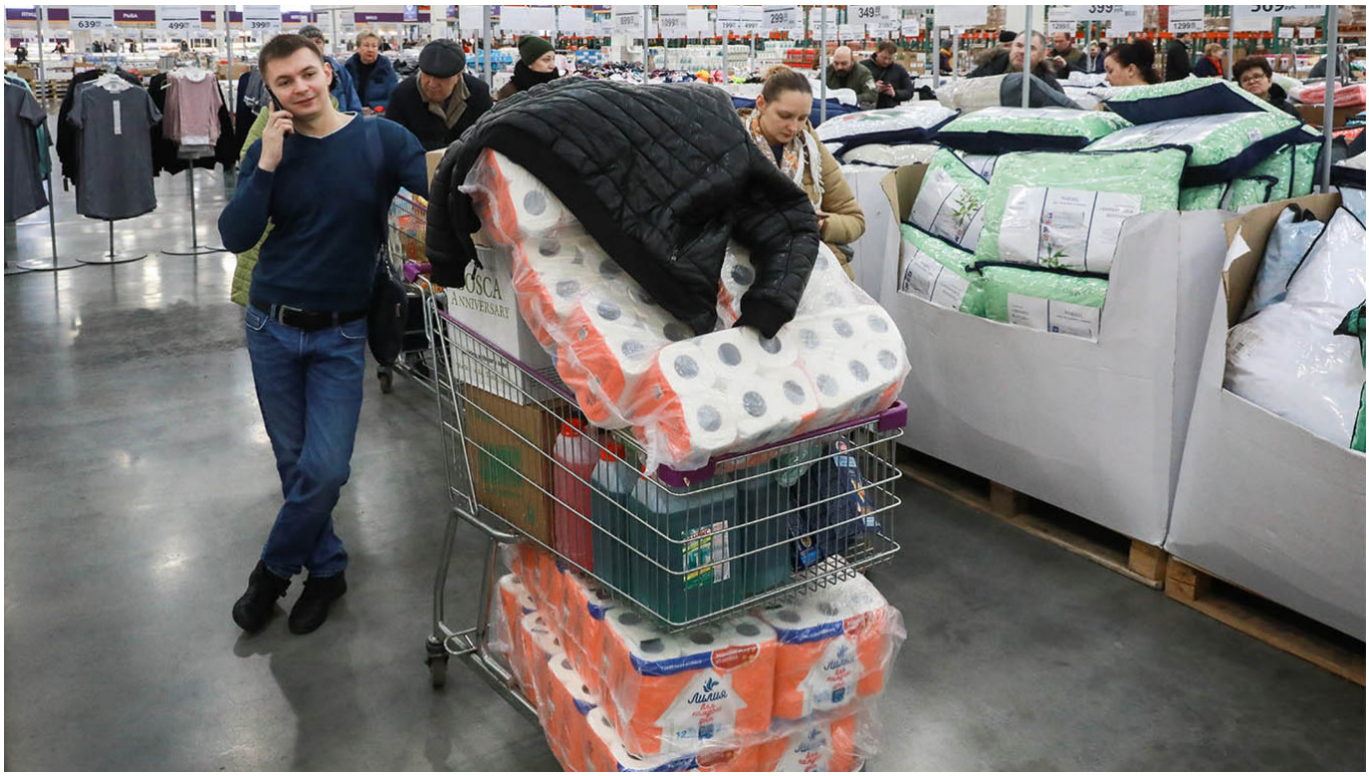
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Telecommuting and Fist Bumps Russian Style

The Word's Worth

Michele A. Berdy's The Word's Worth

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Sergei Konkov / TASS

Удалёнка: telecommuting

In Moscow, like just about everywhere else on the planet, most of our lives are now taken up by coronavirus. We're worrying about it, reading about it, talking about it, probably dreaming about it, and almost all changing what we do and how we act because of it. If you are reading about it or need to talk about it in Russian, here's some help negotiating the lexicon of a pandemic.

At work — well, almost no one is at work these days. For those who are, it's all about not touching and keeping clean: ограничить физические контакты между людьми, проводить дезинфекцию, а при работе с документами и денежными купюрами

использовать дезинфицирующие средства (limit physical contact, disinfect, and use a disinfectant when working with documents and currency.)

But companies that can have switched to удалённый or домашний режим (telecommuting, working at home). Всех сотрудников перевели на удалённую работу (All the employees switched to remote work.) Фирма порекомендовала всем сотрудникам переходить в домашний режим (The company recommended that all its employees work from home.) In common parlance this is удалёнка: Некоторым фирмам перевести сотрудников на удалёнку проще (It's easier for some firms to have their employees telecommute.)

This has of course caused some new problems, and you can now find dozens of articles with titles like this: Как научиться работать на удалёнке и не впасть в депрессию (How to telecommute and not get depressed.) Each person finds his or her own way of dealing with self-isolation (самоизоляция): На удалёнке нет сил изображать интеллектуалку, кто еще досмотрел последнюю серию "Содержанок"? (I'm working at home and don't have the energy to try to look intellectual, so who else has seen the last episode of "Kept Women"?)

You're also not going to be leaving your city for a while: Фирмы запретили или ограничили иностранные командировки и отменяют массовые мероприятия. Многие отказались даже от деловых поездок по России (Companies have banned or limited foreign business trips and are cancelling activities for large numbers of people. Many have even stopped taking business trips around Russia.)

In Russia you can still go almost anywhere in the city, but you need to learn how to tell people to keep out of your personal space. When someone extends his hand, you can back off and say: Без рукопожатия! (No handshakes!) Some folks go for кулачное приветствие (fist bump). But we are advised: Лучше всего здороваться, не прикасаясь друг к другу (But it's better to greet each other without touching.)

Social distancing (ограничение контактов на близком расстоянии) hasn't really caught on — which you might guess from the awkward, long way of describing it. If someone invades your personal space, try saying: Отойдите, пожалуйста (Step away from me, please) or, if they don't get it: Не стойте близко ко мне (Don't stand close to me.) Or you can explain: Рекомендуют соблюдать дистанцию не менее одного метра друг от друга (The recommendation is that we stand at least one meter apart.)

When you go out and about, you might see some strange sights, such as: на некоторых входах стоят медсестры в масках и очках, они измеряют температуру людей бесконтактными термометрами (nurses in masks and protective glasses stand at some entrances and check people's temperatures with no-contact thermometers). Стойте спокойно (Stand still.)

In stores, get used to the traditional Russian pastime of panic-buying. This is good and bad. The bad bit is that unless you go shopping right after a shipment from the warehouse has arrived, forget that pasta dinner you were dreaming about. The good bit is that your next-door neighbor now has a year's worth of pasta, flour, grains and legumes under the bed and might be willing to share or barter. This is an excellent skill to learn: Три рулона туалетной бумаги за пачку гречки? (Three rolls of toilet paper for a package of buckwheat groats?)

All of this is about профилактика коронавируса (prevention of coronavirus). But: в случае неблагоприятного сценария... (In the case of an unfavorable turn of events...) To protect everyone and keep medical facilities free for the truly ill, the old advice has been thrown out the window. One Russian physician said on the radio: Государство должно срочно поменять лозунги от "Не занимайтесь самолечением. Обратитесь к врачу" к "Сидите дома, тепло оденьтесь, много пейте жидкости. Проветривайте квартиру" (The government must immediately change its slogans from "Don't self-treat. Go to a doctor" to "Sit at home, dress warmly and drink a lot of fluids. Air out the apartment.")

If you don't get better, stay at home and call 103. All you need to say is У меня симптомы коронавируса (I have the symptoms of coronavirus). Key words and phrases: одышка (can't catch my breath), высокая температура (high temperature), сухой кашель (dry cough).

Будьте здоровы! (Be healthy!)

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