Good Morning Fellow Apes and Apettes!

Let's start a discussion about disinformation and misinformation. This is **real-talk time**, so there are fewer curse words and with>!FLASHY FORMATTING!
Definitions via [Merriam-Webster's Dictionary](https://www.merriam-webster.com/)

* Misinformation: incorrect or misleading information
* Disinformation: false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth

Since claiming this forum was "my design" many have sent messages asking if I was Elon Musk. Take a second look at what I wrote. It's all vague, making wild claims of knowing people, promising documents, and more. There there is the infamous picture! It's a funny everyday scene with common or silly objects. Many epidemiologists were warned that a pandemic was long overdue hence the Most Viral Award ribbon. There is a marijuana cigarette on one of the astronauts which is always a raging issues.

Ask yourself: Have I lost interest in this post because the formatting isn't flashy and there aren't pictures?

Next question: ***Why*** *do I look for that type of formatting?*

Just like the Stock Market, disinformation and misinformation causes suspicions then fears to rise. We become terrified of one another. We fear being left holding the bag, thus demanding answers in an emotional manner. Others throw people they fear under the bus. In order to "get out" out of this cycle, the various groups and individuals collect and sometimes even fabricate evidence to upload about potential targets or topics. Sometimes they split off into smaller chat rooms [which make you an easier target for disinformation](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/parenting/online-hate-groups-kids.html). New members come and go, but there is always a core group with the single goal of gathering information. Eventually, it turns into an echo chamber where people are dragged and turned into targets.

In short, we all become assets to promote a cause we don't represent: fighting with one another, causing strife with one another.

But there is another solution: talking to one another. And more importantly, ***listening*** to one another.

It's challenging when so much of our National discussion occurs online because data is forever. In the past, people would obfuscate their identity, many creating online personas to fit their audience. This isn't new - we do this in our day-to-day life to extent. We all have different roles when interacting at work, with friends and with our family. We are able to have different opinions. We are able to reach out to those different from us.

Unfortunately, the internet has become more sophisticated. Paid actors are a real thing as we have learned with GME. Tech companies aren't regulating as they should and actually hide research showing their platforms are damaging. But things are starting to move with more investigative journalism, more whistleblowers, more movement in congress. Here are *five results* of those actions to get you started. They might be slow reading at first, but you have to retrain those ape brains to be fine-tuned machines.

But wait! Read that paragraph again. *How* has the internet become more sophisticated? *How* do we know paid actors are in GME - are they actually present or do many simply fear the idea? Does italicizing *five* lead to thoughts that is a sufficient amount of links? And what do I mean by retraining?

Do you think any differently about the information presented here? The best way to combat disinformation

is to use those critical thinking skills by asking questions. It's okay not to know or to be unsure. The best thing you can do is recognize that and do your research.

Here are the articles to read.

[Disinformation for hire, a shadow industry, is booming](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/25/world/europe/disinformation-social-media.html) (NY Times - Paywall)

[Top Democrats unveil bill to rein in tech companies' 'malicious algorithms'](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/14/top-democrats-unveil-bill-rein-tech-companies-malicious-algorithms/) (Washington Post)

[Whistleblower's SEC complaint: Facebook knew platform was used to "promote human trafficking and domestic servitude"](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/facebook-whistleblower-sec-complaint-60-minutes-2021-10-04/) (CBS Whistleblower report - in case you missed it)

[COVID-19 | The Role of Misinformation and Disinformation in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recommendations for Change](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/events/covid-19-role-misinformation-and-disinformation-covid-19-pandemic-and-recommendations-change) (Harvard Kennedy School)

[Disinformation's spread: bots, trolls and all of us](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02235-x) (Journal Article in Nature from 2019)

Preview for the Next Posts:

1. How to spot misinformation and disinformation.
2. How to pick out good sources and evaluate them.
3. How to roll up your sleeves and be part of a bigger movement.