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## **Retail therapy: Stores in the time of COVID-19 - by Carol Todreas**

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Retail

Retail therapy is the pursuit of shopping to make one feel good, especially in times of stress. Coined in the 1980s when shopping became a national pastime and there were many more stores than today, shoppers flocked into stores and malls for well-being, as an escape.

Retail therapy needs a physical store and a live salesperson with whom to chat. Simple enough in preCOVID days, but given the pandemic and its resultant loss of stores, (over 30,000 expected to close in 2021) obtaining such therapy has become a problem leaving many seeking this form of therapy in a continual search for fulfillment.

Even before the pandemic, stores were closing and pickings were slim. But now finding interesting stores is reaching crisis conditions just as demand from every generation is rising.

Some shoppers have taken to combining walking and pop-up searching in malls, but mostly finding dated stores and several vacancies; others are masking up to walk around neighborhood centers hoping for a find ...even just one store will do.

Stores providing retail therapy these days are special. Discovering such a store, the shopper experiences an "A-HA" moment, breathes deeply and readies to buy.

Such is the case at two relatively new stores. 2nd Hand Rose and Your CBD Store Needham. Both located in Needham Town Center. Both retail therapy providers; both with excellent customer service, both aligned with the stars to be an integral part of the 21st century. Here is why:

2nd Hand Rose, a curated woman's consignment boutique with designer and contemporary brands of all categories of clothing and accessories. Not just your ordinary array of consignment goods, but

more than that a visual pleasure dome of merchandise from designer sunglasses to every other category of women's apparel. Its not just the Chanel's and LV's that dazzle, it is the "feel" of the store, the comfort with the owners who actually help. The experience is fun and refreshing.

Your CBD Store Needham is, in contrast, a minimalist designed boutique that feels more like a spa/salon than a retail store. The store sells organic CBD products derived from hemp. Inside the décor is harmonious with generous spacing between merchandise. Products include creams, pet products, bath and beauty accessories, and oil tinctures, all for well-being and healing pain. Journey here to discover, to explore and to feel good.

Retail therapy is a big reason we shop. It's time now to place such stores in town centers and in renovated shopping centers and malls. These are tenants of today who will gently ease us back from clicks into the pleasures of bricks. They make us feel good. And right now we can all use that.

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