

Julian Lapidus – My Personal Life & Reflections During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Today is May 1, 2020. We have been under the stay-at-home order for about one and a half months. Why? Because of the coronavirus. It is spreading not only in the US but around the entire world. Every day, on the news, there is information on the virus. The press talks about it *nonstop*. I just want them to change the topics already.

A significant aspect of my life has changed—university. Ever since the stay-at-home order, we have moved to online classes. With that, many changes have occurred. We use a program called “Zoom.” The program is used to complete lectures, and we use it to communicate with our professors as if we are in a typical class.

Having to use a computer to obtain my lectures has unfolded new challenges—such as facing technical difficulties. My Microsoft Surface crashes often. It can be extremely annoying to wait for it to reboot for me to rejoin my classes. It is always a worry—to know if whether the Internet will be working or if the personal print will even print. Now, that we are relying exceptionally heavily on technology, it has become a non-negotiable commodity.

Another aspect that has drastically changed is the fact that supermarkets are not functioning as usual. The local shopping centers and public places have become desolate. Luckily, we are still allowed to shop for groceries at chains such as Sam’s Club or Costco. I remember that when the quarantine just started, people were flooding the supermarkets for food and other things. One thing—that has drastically stood out—has been peoples’ obsession over toilet paper. *Every* supermarket has run out of toilet paper. Also, supermarket employees wait outside the stores and allow only a certain amount of people into the stores at a time. We cannot simply walk in and out of the

supermarkets as we wish any longer due to the coronavirus.

Supermarkets worry that if too many people are in the store at one time, that the coronavirus could get exchanged. Local coffee chains such as Starbucks and Peet's Coffee and Tea have also shut down. My social life has become nonexistent. I can only text, call, or video chat my friends nowadays because we cannot physically meet up.

To keep our mental states in check, we have to look for some of the positives. One of those things is that I finally have a regular sleep schedule. My commute, on average, would take 2-3 hours per day in total. Before, due to commuting, it was challenging to be well-rested and complete my assignments at the same time. The quarantine has helped with this issue. Nowadays, I wake up every day at around 7:30 AM. This period also includes the weekends. Due to a regular sleeping schedule, I generally have more energy to complete my assignments. I am less tired than before the quarantine because I did not need to hassle around. Currently, there is no more need to bother between classrooms, train stations, or my car. Much unpredictability has been taken out of factor, making college-related requirements easier to complete.

Another reality that has become easier has been attending office hours or getting extra help from professors. Due to the quarantine, everyone is now more or less available behind screens. Professors answers email quicker than before. Also, office hours have become extremely useful since now they are virtual. Before, office hours would require extra energy to attend. Sometimes, it would require emailing the professor to schedule a time to address something. Now, office hours are more frequent, and the hassle of getting a professor's attention over a concern has become minimal. Maybe, office hours should stay online even when the quarantine ends!

The week of March 15-21 was rather interesting. It was when the university took a week off to transition to online learning. During that week, I experienced an impromptu "spring break." That week became a

time for me to recollect myself after a hectic week of exams. I'll always remember that week now, due to the coronavirus outbreak. I firmly believe that the coronavirus outbreak memory will never fade because I never once experienced *anything* like this in my life before.

Besides my personal experiences, I would like to sum up the parts. While this pandemic is horrible, in a way, it had its positives. It was a time to relax at home and to avoid the hassles of life. However, I do want things to go back to normal. The pandemic, as I have said, is something I never experienced in my life. I do want it to end, and for society to move past it. This pandemic is a learning experience, a time to reflect. It taught me to value the simpler things in life and enjoy the moment instead of worrying about the future so much. I will take these lessons to heart once we can see each other again and enjoy life from outside of our homes.

Thanks to everyone who has read this far!