

It does not affect you, until it happens to you

COVID-19 has changed the world in a matter of months; our human experiences, so used to routine and fast motions, have been stopped and changed drastically. When it began, it seemed so far away, concern never was an option though. As a student, an international student, my mind was always surrounded by the same questions, did I do all my homework? Am I going to be late? How am I going to pay for school? I had no time to think about a sickness so far away from me. It wasn't until March that I realized that it was getting closer, more dangerous, and it affected anyone no matter where they were from. In one week, March 9-17, everything that I knew as my routine changed. In the news, everyone was hoarding in resources; the government began fighting more publicly, looking for the right approach for the pandemic. My own country, Colombia, decided to close its doors in order to keep the virus controlled; everything was going downhill.

It was like the earth had pressed a stop and rewind button, silence filled the streets of my house and birds began singing for more hours in the morning. The world went online, Wifi being our best friend and zoom our new teacher. The emptiness we all felt began showing a few days into quarantine; humanity had gone so deep into the routine of producing that having nothing to do made us crazy. Families had to share time together, parents had to raise their own children, teens had to stay home and not party. I began to realize, that this pandemic was not like the Spanish Flu or Aids, the world had shifted from worrying about the human to the money produced and the resources needed. We became dependent of the routine, of the cheap food and the cars taking us whenever and wherever we wanted; it was so bad, that governments did not worry about how many people were dying, but rather that a communist country was going to beat them in the GDP.

I had done all of that, worried about money and school and if we were going to have Burger King open because I needed a burger for my cheat day. I was so deep in my materialistic mind, that I

did not, for one minute, thought about my two parents living the pandemic in my home country. April 3 of 2020, my dad on his way to work (because he is an essential worker, for a bank) began to feel weak and hot. April 5 of 2020, he was diagnosed with the virus. April 6 of 2020, I received a call from my mom to tell me that he had been taken to the hospital, with no one to see or take care of him; and that she, an asthmatic and anemic woman might have it too.

I was 6000 miles away, I repeated myself, unable to catch a flight and go to my country without being at risk of losing my student visa and that the government would not let me in. And right then, as my dad fought to breath normally; I realized that the contemporary world had become so selfish and materialistic that it is not until it happens to you that you take danger seriously. I prayed, to whatever being that looks upon us, to change my dads' fate. Many said to me not to worry, the virus was not deadly, but I could not listen, I could not see another conclusion to the story than the fact that because he was going to work, he had gotten infected and he was going to die.

While my dad's recovery is slow, and he is back home and safe. I realized that this pandemic, as many of the tragedies of the world; show the best and worst sides of humanity. I see people everywhere protesting for a haircut, for a beer and for being able to go back to work; but I wish to no one to have to endure the feeling of death and panic that the sickness brings upon you and yours. Since my dad's diagnose, I began to help others that might be alone, like me, buying them groceries and making alcohol paper towels for cleaning. While there are the ones that desire to go back to that materialistic routine, there are thousands of us that have seen that the earth needed that breathing. At some point, when this is over, we need to go back to stopping the production and share time with the ones we love and care for the earth that holds us together.

As for me, I will be a catching a plane when this is better, and going to hug my parents tightly, never letting my routine in the way of loving them fully again.