

I am not too good at writing, nor do I have any love for it but here we go anyways.

This pandemic has in a sense for me not been to life-changing when we compare my day to day life of today to how it was before the pandemic. I am still a bit of shut-in, in the time that I'm not in class I'm still on the computer and in my free time I still play video games or research topics that I'm interested in such as my plan for this weekend researching the California codes and regulations surrounding insurance in our state because I want my parents home insurance to cover certain items that are in need of repair. Also for the past 4 months I have been regularly attending classes and doing my classwork for them in the same area as I would have before, my garage. I still clean regularly around my house and often feel as though I am doing more than I probably should but know that it is the only way to keep my mom happy and allowing me to explore recipes that aren't from my own culture. With that point I realize that I should probably mention that I am hispanic with both of my parents having emigrated here long before I was born, one illegally and the other legally with my mom being a citizen and my father being a green card resident which he has had for over thirty years. In addition to doing my household chores and my schoolwork, on the days when it is deemed I am not busy enough I am recruited to go help my father and brother run a business that we created just a few years ago, and unlike many other people work only slowed for us for about a month and then we were back at it in full swing and as of right now we are busier than ever. In my extended family an uncle of mine has even noted that the pandemic has also gone really well for his family since they don't go out as much and as a result have saved up much more of their money over this past year. On the surface level to nothing seems to have changed for me or my family since we were never big on going out, work never really stopped for us, and even our spending habits have rarely changed.

I think I say these things simply because I always like to focus on the positive, or not even think about the negative because I often forget that the negative is there as a result of being able to make my own little bubble. But when forced to think about it and remember this pandemic has greatly affected my family. My immediate family has been infected, as far as we know, even though my mom works in a grocery store that has had multiple people test positive and people have only come to sanitize the palace as a result several days after the company found out about, which I think should be illegal since they also didn't shut down the store. My father who does work for his own company is still a blue collar worker who spends a lot of time dealing with clients face to face as a result of the nature of his work, which is driving roll-offs and getting signatures from clients on paper. In my extended family several people have died most of which I don't even know their names, but two of the people that died were the father and sister of my uncle who was not even able to attend their funerals as a result of this happening in Mexico while we live in California. Now a large portion of my fathers family that have also emigrated here live on the same street and interact a lot daily, that uncle is one of them and about five of the six households from my family contracted coronavirus that I know for sure. About thirty people due to the relatively large and partially multi-generational families that we have. These are the people that I know about even though I am the one that is most often kept out of the loop. My father's mother was not able to visit us here in California as a result of us cautioning against it since we do not want her to fall ill and likely die from the virus, which we still consider an extremely wise decision since the household that she primarily stays with is one of the households where the entire family got infected. With all these things happening one thing

that irked me is that my grandmother from my mothers' side did not want to spend Thanksgiving with us. I know that this sounds incredibly selfish but let me explain why this irked me. Her explanation as to why we shouldn't was that it had been said on the news that there should be no reunions and everyone should stay in their own home in order to help slow the spread of the pandemic, with this statement I am one hundred percent on board since I don't want anything bad happening to my grandparents. However, she runs a Herbalife "club" out of her home that she did not close down, stop, or even have people wearing masks at. I know this because I would go pick up my grandfather on a regular basis to take him to his doctors' appointments and people only started wearing face masks inside when they regularly saw me walking in wearing it. In addition to this my grandmother believes the this pandemic is an elaborate conspiracy to give the government more power. For these reasons I knew that there was another reason that she did not want to spend Thanksgiving with her family, to which I just needed to remember all the past years when she would come up with excuse after excuse in an attempt to not have a Thanksgiving. People may still disagree with me on this but I firmly believe that she used this as an excuse to get out of an event that she didn't want, since I still regularly spent time with her, as did my parents, as did people that I would consider strangers, and yet spending four hours with her family would give her a disease that doesn't even exist according to her.

On a slightly more personal level I believe that I have been greatly damaged by this pandemic in relation to both my professional goals, and my social goals. Since I had spent most of the 2019-2020 academic year focusing on adapting to university life I had decided that I would use this academic year to learn about graduate programs and apply to them. Since I have not been able to effectively do that, I have decided that I am going to take a gap year and hopefully be able to effectively look into graduate programs and apply to the ones that would work for me. In regards to my social goals I know that my social skills are subpar and that the only way to better them is to constantly work on them. I was using the extra time before this to focus on improving those skills by simply socializing with other students at my university. As a result of this pandemic I have not been able to continue many of those social connections in part because I have returned home and it is a good two hour drive away, and as a result of the long times that I have now spent without socializing with people, my social intelligence seems to have decreased and my social skills have regressed.

I know that much of these negative aspects are not quantifiable, and others may not even see them as negative, but I believe that it will take a long time to recover from the multi-dimensional aspect of this pandemic because we just can't replace much of the time lost. Some of the most depressing things about this pandemic is that I live in a blue-collar community that has been hit very hard by the pandemic, since we can't stop going to work in person, and we are surrounded by communities that wish to lift the lockdowns, end mask mandates, and oftentimes don't even believe that there is a pandemic going on simply because they haven't been infected. It is disappointing to see much of this and hopefully this info helps a bit in investigating the effects and reverberations from the pandemic.