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A Journal of a Plague Year

HSNC 2100

COVID-19 pandemic was an emotional roller-coaster filled with many pros & cons for me. During the pandemic first started, I stopped working due to students being out of school. I am a paraprofessional. At first having days off from work sounded amazing but, after a while the happiness faded away. Just waking up and doing the same thing over & over, not being able to see my students took a toll on me. When you get used to a routine, and then it being interrupted you just feel out of place, not balanced. All I could think about is if they were okay. Dealing with students you realize many of them deal with a lot of stuff at home, and sometimes school is an escape for them. Not being able to communicate to ask if they were okay bothered me.

During the pandemic, I started to see it as a blessing in disguise. While I stayed home, I was able to have more time for myself. I caught up on rest, I started eating healthier, and just taking care of myself overall. Having to stay inside made me take a step back from eating fast food. I am asthmatic, so I had to be even more careful because I was at a higher risk of catching the virus & being sicker than my peers. While I was home, I was building up my immune system. My skin was glowing, and my hair was growing healthy. The pandemic gave me a pause button on life, and for it to just slow down and take it in. It gave me time to get my mental & spiritual health together. I needed that. The pandemic gave me a reset button.

While the pandemic was taking place, I returned to college after taking a semester or two break. It was very challenging for me. I wasn't accustomed to taking classes online. I felt like I didn't learn anything, my focus wasn't there. I remember just waking up, rolling over, and just signing

onto class. Sometimes I would just even go back to sleep. Life didn't feel real at that point. I feel like I strive better in a classroom setting, hearing & seeing the professor teach.

Living became so different. I remember having to wear a mask 24/7 once you're outside. You couldn't enter anywhere without a mask. There were shortages of paper towels, even sanitizing sprays. People fighting over things like boxes of masks. You couldn't cough, or even sneeze in public without all eyes being on you. Life felt so surreal. Even still to this day after the pandemic you can't cough or sneeze outside without people looking at you strangely or disgusted. You'll get looked at as if you aren't human. People also still wear masks now.

One thing that was really a problem for me was not being able to see my friends. I felt like I was being tortured. I went months without seeing them. Only being able to speak to them through the phone felt so weird, and just out of place. I love hanging out with my friends almost every weekend to unwind from a busy week & just have fun, but, due to COVID that changed. At moments I felt alone and just used to think "is this what life has become?" I would say that because of the pandemic many people lose touch of how to communicate and bond physically without technology. I feel like everyone just communicates over different platforms on social media, especially the younger generation. When I was growing up, we stayed in the front of the building or went to the park to play with friends vs. During/ after the pandemic everyone got used to bonding over technology. Kids are just playing on a device 24\7 instead of going out and hanging with friends physically.

Even though there were a few cons for me to deal with through the pandemic, I am thankful. I caught COVID-19 once, and I was so sick. Luckily for me, after a while I got better, and it didn't result in me being hospitalized. I am just very thankful that I still have life. Life made a few changes but, it's okay. I didn't lose any close loved ones due to COVID-19. I think COVID-19

was just an eye opener, well at least for me. It gave me an opportunity to just slow down. It also taught me a lesson that life is short, tomorrow isn't promised. Do not take life or loved ones for granted, you'll never know your last moments with them. The pandemic made me appreciate life more.