

Mixed feelings

By Moyinoluwa Okunloye

My life – long dream has been to be able to have some time to myself. As an introvert, I have imagined and fantasized about a period when I can just be alone, without any disturbance or interactions with people – just me alone doing whatever I care to do. The world was always too loud and the streets were always too busy. Everyone appears to want to talk at the same time and no one actually cares to listen. The noise always sends a painful ting down my whole body and every day that I have had to go to work, I couldn't wait to get back home. Because I wanted to be rid of all that noise, all of that intrusion to my sanity.

And my wish came true in the form of a horrible pandemic. The universe' sense of humour came to play in the form of a forced social isolation. And oh! I was happyat first. Even though the world was going through it and we all are affected, I decided to focus on the silver lining – the gift of my own space. I was elated to get to be alone. I might have even done a dance in my mind because of how privileged I felt to be able to just be. Pure bliss, I imagined. So, I took advantage of it. I wrote endlessly for www.betteryou.blog, I focused on work and tried to clear my deadlines and I utilized the time to really listen to my mind, to God and to strategize on the outcomes that I desire for my life in the coming years. These things I knew I might not have been able to solely focus on if things had been so normal. Silver linings are so important to me, so that was my sole focus through the first few weeks.

However, as time goes by, things are becoming a little too real in ways that submerges my silver linings. It turns out introverts like the option of going out even if they might not use it. I miss the option of travelling to see my families, even when I had turned it down several times because of work and other engagements. I am a hugger and my life is not the same without the privilege to hold and hug my village people (my family and friends). I have recently also discovered that motivation from colleagues just by seeing them seated and working in the same office actually helped me to focus – I do miss that.

Now, everything is blurry. For someone who loves to plan, the uncertainty of when vaccines will be available is killing. I am terrified at the abortive thought of when things will become normal again, even more so at the definition of what 'normal' would be henceforth. I fear for the shape

that public discourse would take, what meaning all individuals and groups are taking from this and how much impact this time is having on everyone. I am blank on most mornings now. I am less enthusiastic about work and my anxiety and low self – esteem kicks in more often now, for my job and for my future.

But I still try to stay positive, taking every day as it comes while I remain grateful to be alive and in good health. I pray daily for people who are directly affected by this pandemic and offer thanks to God for the health workers. And when this comes to mind, my fears seem a little bit light. Because whether or not we wanted it, the human race and globalization is gaining a more humane meaning.