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Life during a Pandemic

The recent COVID-19 virus has created a scenario in which humanity has been forced to adapt in a way that it is not used to. Each person has been given a single simple task; stay home and prevent the spread of the virus. Throughout history, humans have had to adapt to diseases and viruses to ensure that they survived. When the new world was discovered the natives living here were exposed to numerous diseases. Smallpox wiped out the indigenous populations across the Americas. The Europeans had no idea that they were introducing this disease to the new world and watched as the population plummeted. The natives had no idea what was happening, and the Europeans did not have the ability to help treat them. Through every pandemic in history science and medicine advanced to help prevent something like this from happening again in the future. It is quite disheartening to see how far we have come in terms of medical advancements, but we are unable to properly stop a virus. We have people who believe that it is fake and others who are selfish and still choose to go outside. These people are putting the entire population at risk for no reason. It has caused this pandemic to last longer than it should because we are essentially botching our response. It has caused people all around the world to put their life on hold and they are missing out on all sorts of opportunities.

My own life has been disrupted in a way that can never be fixed. At the beginning of the stay at home order, I had multiple events going on in my personal life. At the beginning of March, I had my 22nd birthday but was unable to do anything because of the fear of the virus. I

know I will have plenty of birthdays in the future but during this school year, I had fostered deep relationships with some of my friends and wanted to do something with them. It is unfortunate that I was unable to do anything with them, but this would be the worst of my worries moving forward. I am Persian and during the spring we celebrate what we call the Persian New Year. This signifies that spring has come and that life is beginning to bloom. This lasts from the middle of March until the beginning of April. During this time, it is expected that people visit all of their family starting from the oldest to the youngest. Most of my extended family is older and when COVID-19 began to spread in the United States we could not visit each other. This is the first time in my 22 years of life that I haven't been able to celebrate my cultural ideals with my family. Out of continued fear I decided to stay in Westwood because I did not feel comfortable going home. My father is 67 and my mother has a weakened immune system. Because I had been at UCLA, I did not feel that I could guarantee that I would not have the virus. I have been up in Westwood for the past 2 months now and I have watched as my roommates and my friends have all slowly left. To ensure that I keep myself sane I try to walk 5 miles each day. I tend to walk around campus and Westwood, and it is fascinating to see a place that was once filled with so much hustle come to a complete stop. The strange thing to see is that everything on campus looks perfect. The buildings and the walkways are all empty ready to be used. UCLA is beautiful in the spring, but nobody is able to see it or use it which makes things feel worse. I miss being able to walk to class and see my friends. I thought I would enjoy online classes but quite frankly it's horrible. I am unable to focus in my room and because of this, I cannot learn. I never thought I would say it, but I miss going to a lecture hall. I think the worst part about this entire situation is that I am a senior.

This is my last quarter and what makes it worse is I am a transfer student. My time at UCLA has been short and with the pandemic, my time is even shorter. I truly have enjoyed every minute at UCLA and being able to find some of my closest friends. I had a lot of events planned with my friends and with my Esports team. I was going to travel with friends around the country and had events planned with colleges across the country. I have been forced to cancel all of my plans, some that I will never be able to reschedule. The pandemic has made me realize that I truly took for granted everything that was going on in my life. I'm going to miss out on a lot of goodbyes and end of the year activities which hurts the most. I will never be able to truly say goodbye to some of my friends and professors. As of now, I do not even know if I will have a proper graduation. After working so hard to get to this point in my life I will not be able to fully experience what it is like to be a college graduate. People across the globe are continuing to lose out on all sorts of experience that cannot be replaced.

Throughout the world, people have been forced to adapt and to stay inside to ensure that the virus does not spread. As people are staying inside, they are having to deal with other problems that they could ignore before because of how busy life was. I personally had to deal with problems with my mental health that I had been ignoring. I'm positive that other people have had to do the same thing and because of that, it has caused people to be even more irritable in an already horrible climate. I think this is why people in the United States have had pockets of protests across the country. People are unable to handle life at home and want things to return to normal. These people have never dealt with their issues. It could be because of negligence or the stigma behind mental health but now that people are forced to stay inside, they are having to deal with their problems. With people failing to stay inside it highlights the problems with the United States health care system. Outside of the United States, we have seen as our institutions that are

meant to help have failed to act fast enough. What I am hoping happens is that governments across the world will begin to prepare for events like this. On top of this, I hope that public opinion begins to shift towards better prepare for these sorts of events. If this event does not cause people to change their ideas towards a better health care system, then nothing will change their mind.

The world will bounce back from the current pandemic, but they must learn from it to prepare themselves for the future. The global economy will hurt for years to come because of how intertwined the world is. The globalization that has occurred has been extremely beneficial but as some of the bigger countries are hurt by the pandemic there will be a ripple effect across the world. It will take years before everything recovers and because of this people will get hurt. In the United States, this is already proving to be true. People are being laid off in the millions and because of this, they are unable to pay things like mortgages, loans, and credit card debt. If this continues to happen people will be unable to pay for years to come because of the setbacks they are currently experiencing. This pandemic has the ability to push people to want a lot of new policies, these policies will be liberal in nature but would help elevate a lot of the problems that are currently happening. In the United States, these policies will be needed and agreed on by both political parties so that the citizens of the United States are not harmed by having little action. I hope that both sides are able to put aside their political ideologies so that they can come together and pass laws that will not only help the current climate but help ensure that something like this does not happen again.

In order for the world to recover from this pandemic, people need to step up and help each other out. Everyone has experienced loss and is currently hurting but in order for humanity to recover, they must learn from everything that has happened. If people continue to act for their

own accord the world will continue to hurt, and more people will die. We as a society have to continue to progress and create new policies to ensure that something like this does not happen again.

Here are some pictures from campus! I talked to Teo and I'm including these so people understand what I meant in my essay. I'm fine with my face being shown for the future.

