

Sam Esmailzadeh

History 129A

Professor Ruiz

TA: Kaleb Herman Adney

## Second Essay

The start of a new year generally begins with positivity that comes from setting new year's resolutions - cultivating an attitude of achieving goals, quitting bad habits, and ultimately improving one's lifestyle. However, the start of this new year felt as if the world was coming to an apocalyptic end. The first weeks of the year kick started with environmental, political, social, and economic turmoil. From natural disasters such as Australia's ravaging nationwide wildfires to threats of another World War emerging as conflicts between the US and middle east amplified, 2020 set unprecedented grounds that my generation had never witnessed before. However, those issues were just beginning. As natural disasters remained in continuity, news broke out that a life threatening virus had surfaced in the Chinese food industry; no one initially expected that the outcome of this novel virus would result in a worldwide pandemic.

How to deal with the unforeseen challenges of the pandemic on a local, national, and global scale has been the major question we are all trying to figure out. Restrictive measures have noticeably been declared in order to contain the virus. Numerous countries have declared lockdowns or have set a series of restrictive measures such as social distancing and stay-at-home orders. Although these public health implementations have effectively been proving to bring relief, unfortunately, many communities and locations around the nation are beginning to minimize the severity of what is going on, particularly, here in Los Angeles. I am a Los Angeles native, born and raised. As I drive through the empty streets, I am constantly seeing groups of people walking around in close proximity to one another, parks are filled with people having picnics, and the amount of people wearing masks seems to be declining as the days go by despite the regulations.

As I write this paper whilst following up on the current events of the pandemic, it has just been released that the LA county stay-at-home order has now been extended through July as stated by Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer during the “Board of Supervisors” conference on Tuesday, May 12. This decision was made as a follow up to the statements made by physician and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Anthony Stephen Fauci. Predictions of the future outcomes of COVID-19 still remain unknown to the public. Unreported cases and falsely spread information through the media are a few highlights of the negligence being exhibited by government officials. As someone who does not have a strong pre-health background it makes it more challenging to differentiate what the realistic outcomes from those that are made up in order to keep the population under control from losing their minds and looking further into global conspiracy theories.

How our country is going to utilize this pandemic as an experience to create more effective guidelines, if something like this were to ever happen again, is the best we can hope for. The wrath of COVID-19 across the nation, has evidently brought a significant amount of unparalleled pressures on the healthcare system. Overworked frontline healthcare workers, limited hospital space, and shortages of medical supplies such as testing kits are just a few highlights of the challenges that have put the healthcare system in a state of frenzy, but the issues get deeper than that. Consequential problems in the healthcare system are now being illuminated to public attention. Inequalities in the system have now been publicized in order to depict the difficulty of accessing quality healthcare especially, in communities of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The disadvantages underserved communities are faced with further shows the gap between the rich and the poor. As blackholes in the healthcare system are now being recognized

it is opening more opportunities to challenge these issues in efforts of creating a better healthcare industry.

The global impact of coronavirus and aid relief to countries around the world are also now being stifled due to the reallocation of funding. Indirect impacts including a lack of access to nutrient rich foods have left single mothers and their children in rural areas at a higher risk of fatally contracting the virus according to a study done by Johns Hopkins University researchers. Further complications can arise if these women begin to receive more funding from NGOs which have the ability to ignite more acts of gender-based violence. Countries around the globe from Afghanistan to the western Sahar are tragically being affected by the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 in congruence to other flaring medical issues and lack of basic resources.

For many around the world, including myself, a series of other inevitable crises have emerged within households that are impacting families at different levels. Financially, the (rightfully) mandated quarantine has left my entire family and I without a steady source of income. Already being on financial aid, the fear of having zero revenue coming in is a frightening thought. How are we going to buy groceries, pay for electrical bills, etc.? Making ends meet just to get by has created an atmosphere of high anxiety that continued to be fueled by uncertainty of what will happen next. As we began watching the impacts of the negativity that was emerging, we knew that something needed to change in order for my family and I to navigate through this new normal.

It can be so easy to succumb to the debilitating anxieties of today's life, but letting that mentality consume you can be just as deadly. This does not mean that you have to constantly stay productive by suppressing feelings, especially in relation to what is going on, but rather, it

means showing up and finding resolutions to those feelings. In order to snap out of a mindset that this battle is permanent, a quote that has stuck with me during this time has been, “You give to life what you give energy to”. During this trying time, my older sister has been practicing forms of gratitude in order to stay afloat which is now a habit that my entire family has picked up. Challenging the way we perceive this situation by re-adjusting our focus to more positive matters, we are channeling our efforts to utilize this time for personal and interpersonal growth. As we encourage each other to promote more positive attitudes and specifically reflect on our time together we have begun noticing the important things in life.

One major positive that has come from all of this is my father’s unemployment status. At first this seemed devastating, as if our last hope of generating some source of income would now be eradicated. My father immigrated to the United States in 1993 and for the past twenty years he has worked twelve hour days seven days a week. Slaving in the hot sun of south central just to give us the life he never had, my father has always been someone I have looked up to. However, growing up, my heart always ached for him. Watching this sweet, generous, humble man having to work so hard made me wish I could take that away from him. One of my goals in life has always been to pursue higher education in attempts to find a more steady paying and sustainable job that would allow me to help my father retire as soon as possible. As the spread of COVID-19 became more and more severe causing small businesses to shut down, for the first time in nearly two decades I have finally seen my father feel relaxed. As a family, we have been able to spend quality time with one another like never before. Our optimism and new outlook on this unfortunate circumstance has allowed us to realize how rich we are in family bonds, a connection that no amount of money could buy.

Moments of crisis have the ability to present new opportunities when channeling new perspectives. Personally, over the past few years I have started to pay less attention to politics and social injustices happening in the world because of how overwhelming it became for me, but I never realized that was a part of my privilege. Even though I do not come from an affluent background I have still been given this sense of entitlement that made it “okay” to get away with living a life of oblivion and denial, because of the color of my skin, whereas a lot of people do not have that same freedom and privilege. The news for me is the harsh, brutal reality of others. As the child of immigrant parents who fled oppression and sought refuge in America, I have failed to recognize the extent of my privilege and how to utilize it in order to help other socially oppressed groups and minorities. The continuing prevalence of discriminatory terrors and inequalities of the justice have been an ongoing issue that keeps getting silenced. As the wealthy class continues to buy their way out of heinous crimes, the population of the poor specifically, those with darker skin tones continue to get the shorter end of the stick. From being denied access to equal opportunity to being unlawfully detained by the system that forces imprisonment, leaving them with a biasly tainted record for life.

Hopefully, with the amount of time this quarantine has supplied there will be room for some political reform as well, in order to avoid returning back to the same conservative inhumane system. Although that might not seem realistic I want to be able to contribute more in bringing upon change. I have started to become more active on social media outlets in attempts to spread more awareness however, I feel as if that is not enough. By recognizing my advantages, I want to leverage my privilege in order to contribute to lasting social changes. I seek to utilize my time now to join a nonprofit organization that aims to give voice to

marginalized groups by supporting them and empowering them in order to shift societal power dynamics that have been implemented and engraved in our society since colonial times. This is just one simple change I have vowed to make.

The negative impacts of the virus might have detrimental lasting effects, but hopeless times cries for a call of action. Hopefully non-governmental organizations alongside governments will be able to come up with effective relief programs to aid the outcome of this travesty. As for now, the best way we as individuals can provide help is through donations of any kind and support to those affected, their families, and loved ones. We must stay united in order to bring positive outcomes as well. Shining a light on the process of growth during these times can have more positive lasting effects on our mental health. Reframing the situation by appreciating the small things in life can help us build resilience and more easily make the light at the end of this dark tunnel more visible.

Bibliography

“Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs.” *University of Utah Health*,

[healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/postings/2020/03/covid19-faqs.php#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20WHO%2C,pressure%2C%20or%20diabetes.](https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/postings/2020/03/covid19-faqs.php#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20WHO%2C,pressure%2C%20or%20diabetes.)

Geneva, and Do you have information to share or concerns to raise? What have we missed?

Email us to let us know. “Coronavirus and Aid: What We're Watching, 14-20 May.” *The New Humanitarian*, 15 May 2020,

[www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/05/14/coronavirus-humanitarian-aid-response.](http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/05/14/coronavirus-humanitarian-aid-response)

“Get Your Household Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019.” *Centers for Disease Control and*

*Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 27 Mar. 2020,

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html#:~:text=A%20COVID%2D19%20outbreak,spread%20of%20the%20disease.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html#:~:text=A%20COVID%2D19%20outbreak,spread%20of%20the%20disease.)