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Impact of COVID-19

The 2020 global pandemic COVID-19 has proven to be absolutely disastrous. It has infected millions, claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands and has negatively impacted the lives of billions of people around the globe. The virus is extremely deadly, and most of the world's population understands the importance of effectively implementing practices and behaviors to stop its spread. Such changes in everyday behavior has altered the dynamic of normal life. Social distancing measures which have been enacted in the country's legislature has left its negative mark on the economy, relationships and overall lifestyle. Dealing with the day to day changes this virus has caused has been incredibly difficult and has truly defined the current era in which we are living. While the world has seen viruses and pandemics before, it has been roughly a century since the world has seen anything of this magnitude. In highlighting the significance of this global pandemic, I will address the manner in which it has affected me personally, my family, and how I believe the virus will continue to have an effect on the human population for generations to come.

With social distancing measures in effect, physical separation between oneself and the rest of society has become unavoidable. This has caused me personally to feel very much

disconnected from my peers and loved ones. As humans, we are deigned interact and socialize with those around us. Though I am grateful that technology has allowed and given our generation the opportunity to connect with others during these adverse times, it is simply not the same in terms of communication that is necessary among the general population of people. Because isolation isn't in human nature, there is simply advancement that technology could offer that could possibly replace our need to meet and communicate properly in person. These unfortunate events have led many people to feel alone and hopeless. The year 2020 was destined to be very big, pivotal year for my life. It was the year I was going to graduate college and continue my career. I had big plans and was truly optimistic that my hard work would pay off. These plans have now been put on complete hold as the job I had lined up for me is no longer offering a job due to lost business as a result of the virus. This idea of being unemployed gives me a very disappointing uneasy feeling about my future. It has been extremely demoralizing and disappointing to know I will need to start from scratch and salvage whatever opportunity I can to earn minimum income to make ends meet. I had previously worked full time to pay my way through college with the hopes of graduating and hitting the ground running in hopes to effectively jumpstart my career. It was a dream of mine that is now being put on hold, and unfortunately, that is a very hard pill to swallow. The depleted mood that has set in as a result of being quarantined has taken its toll on me as it continues to become more difficult to find the motivation to complete the mundane tasks associated with bootstrapping my career and getting my life back on track. By being locked down at home, it is very difficult to wonder what opportunities I am missing and how this is affecting my future.

The corona virus has adversely affected my family in a number of ways. First, from an economic standpoint, both my sister and I were fired from our jobs, which has put immense

pressure on our family. My parents now also fear that they will soon lose the business they have built from the ground up and put their blood, sweat, and tears into. Given the current situation, we fear that we will soon lose all sources of income and be unable to keep up with our overwhelming bills. Furthermore, from a mental and psychological standpoint, my family is also having a very hard time adjusting to the government mandated quarantine. As a working family, we rarely spend time at home and although the first few weeks were nice as we were able to spend time together as a family, the silver linings of the quarantine have lost their appeal and the fear of uncertainty has consumed us. The lack of routine, our lack of control over the loss of our livelihood, and in many ways the infringement on our freedom has taken its toll on our mental health and has left us feeling hopeless and depressed. From a health standpoint, my family has also been affected because although we fear for our finances, we fear even more for our lives and for the lives of our loved ones. Unfortunately, we have experienced a few family friends testing positive for the virus and although they thankfully are feeling much better now, going through the experience of not knowing whether they would make it and also not knowing who else may have contracted it was life changing and terrifying. Overall, it has been very difficult for us as a family to be out in a position where we have to fear for our life and health while also fearing the loss of our business and possibly our home. It's hard to see a light at the end of tunnel, but we do still try to stay positive and thankful for the fact that we are all still safe and healthy.

While things continue to look bleak and hopeless, I am optimistic that things will go back to normal soon. I am concerned about this virus, but I am keeping a level head and refuse to panic. I firmly believe that these difficult times will pass. I believe that in the near future, a vaccine will be introduced, but some of the concerns surrounding this virus always be in the back of people's minds and everyone will learn to adapt to new norms. Historically, the AIDS

epidemic of the late 1980s had slightly similar rhetoric surrounding some of the stigmas surrounding this disease. However, after spokespeople such as Magic Johnson addressed the issue to the masses, it was clear that it was imperative for people to practice safe sex. At the time of the AIDS epidemic, many thought having sexual intercourse would kill them, but they later found comfort in the fact that they would be fine if they made a concerted effort to practice safe sex. We saw similar reactions to the 2009 swine flu. People were reluctant to eat pork products for a while, fearing it could make them sick and potentially kill them. Like other pandemics, the fears died out, but eating clean continued to be on the minds of many. COVID will continue to be a disease where a vaccination will be required for many. Much like a TB shot, I believe it will be one of the things people will be required to get when entering the country or enrolling their children in school. I think that after this virus, people will begin to engage in less physical touching when not necessary. I believe people will seldom greet with hugs and kisses and resort fewer physical greetings. I also strongly believe that hand washing culture will intensify, and Americans will make a more concerted effort to wash their hands and their children's hands more frequently. I also believe that Americans will proceed with more caution when going outdoors when they are feeling ill. I believe masks will become more popularized, and it will be common Courtesy to wear a mask in public if one is sick. In general, I feel as though the main takeaway from this illness will be a sense of mindfulness when dealing with others. Many will be uncomfortable to shake hands and stand close to people, and others will need to understand and respect that. In many ways, this virus will act as a catalyst in making people more aware and careful of sicknesses and disease and will create a sense of urgency in assessing potential signs of danger in efforts of preventing a similar future outbreak.

My assessment of the COVID-19 global pandemic is that it ultimately needs to be taken seriously in order for it to be contained and cured. Though it is no reason to panic, I do believe that this virus will make very subtle changes in the manner in which people carry themselves. Though the virus has created a plethora of personal problems for not only me personally, but also my family and community, I am optimistic that it will pass. I have faith in my community and the American people in engage in the proper practices to effectively eliminate this disease in a timely matter.