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Covid-19: A New Normal

People are no longer shocked when hearing the phrase ‘the world has changed’. The silence of the city streets is blanketed by the voice of media platforms, students at home, and citizens without jobs. It’s the topic of every discussion, the title of every headline, and the concern of every family, however its defeat depends on the deference of everyone’s due diligence. Covid-19 has undoubtedly brought together the national and global masses due to there being a common ‘enemy’. Like a sudden flash of bright light followed by a high pitched ring, I have been stunned by this experience, trying to blink and much as I need or focus as much as I can to see and hear clearly again. There was so much going on, so much planned, and so much potential for me in regards to school and work. Optimistically though, I believe I will be back on track with my extracurricular’s soon, since I see not only myself keeping busy, but people in the essential workforce as well. Most of my time is spent studying or doing school related work, exercising, or working/volunteering either at a medical facility or with doctors at UCLA. Although I am a history major finishing up my last quarter at UCLA, I am also a pre-med student working diligently towards an acceptance into medical school.

As a pre-med, classes I take require my physical presence for the most part, since the lecture portion of the science class most likely is accompanied by a lab section as well. My last quarter at UCLA has been full, with my three history classes and two science classes taking up almost all the time I am allotted in a single day. With the shutdown in place, I have had to work

from home, as do many. Never did I realize how much of an effect the environment of a school has on productivity and mood, when it comes to ambition towards school related work. Not being physically at school gives students an excuse to push off attending a lecture or finishing up an assignment. This is where the lesson of discipline was most prevalent and obvious, as a result of Covid-19. I have had to adjust. At the start of the stay-at-home shutdown, I began waking up a little later, staying up a little later, doing what I *wanted* a little more; I started eating a little more, talking with friends about my current situation a little more, and by taking into account the sum of the parts, wasting time a lot more. It wasn't until three to four weeks into quarantine, when I realized I needed to get back on track with my normal daily routine. Everyone already talked about how this was terrible and so unfortunate over the phone with everyone they knew, so I knew that was something to cut out. No more discussing the matter at hand, everyone is aware of it.

Before I get into this next point, let me explain the importance of running in my life. At the start of college, I wasn't thriving academically and I was not in excellent shape physically. I began to run primarily to lose weight. After understanding that I was sick and tired of being sick and tired (meaning I felt that I have had enough of not being the way I wanted to be, and I was going to change that) it was much easier to keep an extremely strict regimen. Over time, I did get into very good shape and I was surprised to see my grades improve significantly every quarter. Running gave me a euphoric feeling which I never got habituated or built a tolerance to, it made me sharper, a better student, a better friend, more awake, and more of a thinker. So, with that in the back of my mind, I realized after that initial four week period of lackluster adjustment to my new reality, I needed to get back into my daily running routine if I wanted my life to pick back up. My coping method ever since has been running several miles daily. Now, although I am

home, I still feel productive and sharp academically and I feel more capable of reaching out to people whom I'd been in contact with in regards to research or giving talks at conferences, or even volunteering opportunities. Truly the biggest lesson for me is the importance of discipline when it comes to strongly sticking to a set routine. Again I've started waking up early, opening my laptop and getting to work alongside drinking my morning coffee. Comically, the rest of my family has yet to adjust how I have, so in the morning's the heavy silence is a catalyst to productivity.

A lot of what I have picked up from this permanent shift in reality, is in regards to my relation with my family. Being a full time student, I would be at school for the majority of every day, if it wasn't in class it was in the library. Now, I've turned my dining room area into my library. A quiet morning only lasts for so long, meaning as the day progresses, so too does ambient noise. Like a knot that can not be untied, my relationship with my family has strengthened and solidified. Support and positive reinforcement goes a long way, it's the sacrifices they are making in order for me to comfortably study and do what I need to do in order to succeed this quarter as well. A 'Thank you' is a sub-par return on my end, when I what to portray my gratitude towards their actions. Shifting the focus however, Covid-19 has definitely had a more overarching effect on the role's of each family member. Being home more means more cooking, which in turn leads to more cleaning. It means more at home workouts and moving around in the house, which again in turn leads to more cleaning and more laundry surprisingly. It means people bringing more of their work-life to home, which in turn leads to more dependability on one another to stay organized, and more surfaces in the house taken up my notebooks, textbooks, papers, and folders. My father's business which is run exclusively by himself, is now dealt with at home as well. I am aware of how much work there is to be done, yet

it would be dangerous for him to go to work to do it, which is not a fun sight to see from my end. He's a workaholic, which I think is a great thing, but now that work has slowed down, his whole routine consisting of fast paced business has come to a abrupt halt. Two out of three of my siblings are in college and graduate school respectively, meaning more shared workspace and a mutual responsibility to be mindful of each other's noise volume once working.

Off the topic of sharing a close environment with my family for such a long period of time, something I came to realize is the lack of quality time we spent together as a family, not counting times we'd go on vacation together or even restaurants. Just at home, the nights where everyone is doing the same thing, or having a ping-pong tournament in the backyard, those moments are only now obvious to me due to the rude awakening of Covid-19. I took for granted having a fully attended family dinner, or having the freedom to go out any night my school work was done, even if I didn't.

Once 'everything goes back to normal' (which, in reality the word normal has gotten a new definition) I for one will definitely make the most of every minute I'm out in LA, with all the shops and restaurants open, busy streets with honks in the background due to the reemergence of traffic. Seeing all the lit up billboards around LA Live, with the colors purple and gold flood the streets, everyone on a collective mission to watch their home team, the Lakers, win another game, is what I am desperately waiting for as well.

What impact did this have on the world though, I mean, people do feel personally effected and some attacked by this pandemic. I believe there's a whole other agenda on the global scale, a whole different Covid-19 that we don't necessarily see as citizens. Let me briefly start by saying, there is physical and video evidence of books or shows speaking of "Coronavirus" and its effects on the respiratory system, how it originates in China, and how one

day it'll be spread throughout the world and many people will be effected. How this existed before this outbreak, I have no idea, and it's truly strange. Again, proving why on the global scale, there is probably a lot more that regular citizens do not know, but heads of banks or governments do. But now that it exists, we see environmental, political, and economical crises bleeding into the healthcare industry, further crippling and hindering a safe comeback.

From the start, I truly believe politicians are not doing everything right. Listen to the science! Every profession, which falls under a specific sector of the economy, say it be a lawyer, doctor, engineer, teacher, police, etc. *must pass a test* in order to become and practice that profession. However, members of congress, the vice president, and the president, obtain their position *via winning a popularity contest!* There is absolutely zero safeguards in place designated to stop an unqualified human from taking office. With this in mind, I see politicians as egotistical when they speak on a scientific matter vaguely. During times of crisis, a man or woman who has won a popularity contest should really not be in charge of fixing that crisis, rather they should forget about their ego and allow the professionals to think together, and come up with the best possible solution.

The impact on the world, through the problem/side-effects I mentioned besides Covid-19, will be seen as a continuously plummeting stock market, a place where millions of Americans placed their life savings in order to gain interest for their retirement, gone. We will likely see continuous bailouts of major corporations, semi-industrious companies, and small businesses. I mean, airline companies went bankrupt, the auto industry is going bankrupt, all hospitals are overfilled and under employed, small businesses let off the greater majority of their employees who weren't on salary, and employees and students are either not receiving their stimulus checks or are receiving jokingly small amounts of money.

“Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me”. This is why we study history. It would be shameful to allow such things to happen again, although history does not repeat itself verbatim, it surely does rhyme. We’ve seen pandemics, we’ve seen recessions and depressions, however those events were in the past, and in the past the global population was much smaller, in the past flight travel was not as convenient, and major cities were not as dense. What I mean by this is, as time goes on pandemic’s will have much larger hits on a global scale.

Lecture 9 week 5 described the second voyage as the first attempt to colonize the Caribbean. The indigenous people, similar to us in relation to a foreign country, were overrun by smallpox and measles upon the arrival of Christopher Columbus and his men. With no antibodies ever created to recognize these foreign antigen, a strong majority of the indigenous population was wiped out or infected with these diseases. What we today learn from this is the importance of feeding our resources to the scientists, working diligently to create vaccines for diseases before outbreaks occur, diseases from anywhere in the world. We no longer can turn our heads to something happening on the other side of the globe. Now, in 2020, we are all neighbors, actually, we all live under one roof really. All global citizens are responsible for each others health, let's have hope and stay strong in order to get through this together.