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Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal

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Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal #1

Documenting this crisis is not only important, but necessary. It is crucial to have some sort of documentation of any historical event because that documentation will be used in the future to educate and help the people. While reading *How Will We Remember the Pandemic? Museums Are Already Deciding*, it mentions that there was not a lot of documentation on the 1918 Spanish flu or the bubonic plague. This is the time to be documenting our personal experiences whether it is through journaling, videos, art, or social media. It is especially important to note that during this time, not everyone is living through the same experiences. Yes we are all affected by the virus, but some more than others. As a college student, I think my voice adds another perspective of what is happening in the world right now. I am just starting my junior year and I am already frightened of my future. I am scared for my friends who have just graduated and are trying to find jobs while most of America is unemployed. I think our voices are important because the majority of us are young adults with young minds. I feel as though our ways of thinking are in fact different from our parents and grandparents. We can offer new perspectives and new solutions.

I think I will continue to type out these journals. I prefer to think about what I'm writing down and going back and reflecting on what I've written. I do like making videos, however I can lose my train of thought and I want to make sure I address everything. In the future, I may even add some of my art. I have been taking pictures and I've been drawing a lot. I think the photographs in particular might be a good representation of what staying at home is like. Not for everyone, but for me and perhaps other college students.

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal #2

When I think of my last normal day, I immediately think of the night before I went home. I have to admit that sometimes I worry too much, so when I first heard about the virus, I was instantly filled with fear. Almost as soon as I started to think that nothing too crazy would happen in the United States, there were talks in all of my classes of what would happen if we were to be sent home. I was in denial. I thought if everyone would just be extra cautious and maybe wear a mask, everything would be fine. I honestly thought that at any moment a vaccine would be made and be distributed for free. I pride myself on being optimistic, but not realistic. Even when my classes were cancelled, I still felt that we would be back by the end of the semester.

They cancelled classes on a thursday during my last class of the week. Someone announced that they got an email from the school and for the rest of class we talked about how some of us were scared and how some of us were just pissed off at the situation. Thursdays were basically like Fridays for me, so although I was beginning to panic, I knew I had the weekend to look forward too. They still had not kicked us out of the dorms and we were still allowed to go into public places. That saturday, I went to a Saint Patrick's Day party with my roommates. This was the last "normal" day for me. After everything that happened that week, I still had hope that this would all blow over. I felt so stupid going to a party, but I felt that I needed a distraction from what was going on in the world. During the party, I remember going outside to the steps of my friends apartment building and just having this feeling that I would be going home the next day. I can't explain it, but I just somehow knew that I would be home.

When I got back to my dorm, my roommates and I decided that we weren't tired. We tried everything we could to not talk about the future. I remember we put on Ma because that movie makes us laugh. It's one of those really bad horror movies that is so bad, it becomes good. By the time the movie was over, two of my roommates were asleep. It was already four in the morning and the roommate who was up decided she should go to bed too. I couldn't sleep. I had plans to meet my dad for brunch, but both us being horrible communicators, I had no idea for what time. Before I fell asleep, I had that feeling again that I would be home.

As soon as I woke up, I had a text from dad telling me that my mom and him think that it would be best if I came home. I immediately was in tears. It was eight in the morning and I had only slept three hours. I honestly do not get upset that easily, but I was sleep deprived and being in denial was no longer an option. I was so pissed at my dad for telling me to pack up and be ready in two hours. I just wanted further notice and time to process what was happening. All of my roommates were asleep and I was crying trying to pack all of my stuff. Me being me, I thought that I would be back in a few weeks. Again, I am optimistic, but not realistic.

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal #3

The widespread response to the death of George Floyd has impacted me greatly. I have always been aware of the injustices of our country, but I feel that now I am actively advocating for change. Before this event, I honestly didn't know what I could do to help. Social media has been both helpful and not helpful in this event, but because of social media, I have found great organizations to donate to and helpful information on the Black Lives Matter movement. I did not realize how many important events in black history we were never taught in school. I feel like this past month I've learned so much. It pains me to see people take to social media to post about how inconvenient the protests are. Where would we be right now without them? There has already been so much change to come from them, but there is still more to do. I truly cannot fathom why someone would want to dismiss this movement. It scares me that people can be so cruel and hateful. With every movement, there is a group of people there to challenge them. I saw a tweet that pointed out that no one was ever a "meninist" until people started to become feminists. No one was advocating for all lives matter until people were advocating for black lives. I find these people to be ignorant. I just can't understand how you can disagree with a human rights issue. It just doesn't make sense to me. Although it seems impossible, I am hopeful that our country will change for the better.

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal #4

I am thankful that I was able to build a face to face connection with my peers at the beginning of the second semester. I don't know if I would've been as close with some people if we had started online. Yes, it sucks that we had to go online, but at least we had a few months to do class in person. I'm also thankful that my major is so close with one another. We're forced to collaborate all the time and we always support each other's shows. Let's face it, college improv can be awful, but it's fun to see your friends perform. I am trying to focus on all the positives of our situation, but I admit that sometimes it is hard. I miss my friends from school, and I miss my friends at home. I am really looking forward to going out to shows and performing at the Playground Theatre, but I'm not sure when that will be.

I've been staying at home for the most part and it scares me how lazy I've become. I'm a naturally lazy person, but since I can't go anywhere, I just sit and read or watch t.v. all day. What also scares me is how now whenever I have to go somewhere I don't want to. I'd rather just be in my room doing my thing. At the beginning of all of this I really needed some human connection, but now I don't really mind. I used to go on daily walks with my mom and now I don't even want to do that anymore. I'm an easy going person and I adapt to change pretty well. I think I have adapted a little too well because I'm noticing it's easier to ignore facetime and zoom calls with my friends and instead watch a movie. I have become antisocial which is bizarre. I do miss my friends, but for some reason I can't stand facetimeing them. I am actually okay being alone most of the day.

I'll have to start work at a children's day camp soon, so I'll be forced to interact with people other than my family. I'm actually looking forward to work because kids always say the

funniest things and I need some laughter in my life. No offence to my family, but they're not as funny as they think they are. It's such a weird time because my only true human interaction is with my family. I love them, but I need a break.

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Journal #5

The first six months of 2020 still feels like a dream. The kind of dream that when you wake up, you ask yourself: “what the hell was that?” It feels like these six months have dragged on and yet at the same time flew by. I laugh now when I hear bad news, which is actually something that I did before, but now I don’t feel ashamed about it. It’s not that I don’t care, I am just in shock by everything that is happening. Now, the first thing I do in the morning is check Twitter. Is Twitter always reliable? No. But, it’s the fastest way for me to see what’s going on right now. I am more in tune with what’s happening around the world than I was six months ago. The only news that I constantly kept up with was pop culture. It sounds bad, but it’s the truth. I still keep up with pop culture, but now I am also aware of more important matters.

I am back at home and I currently am not working. I have a lot of downtime to reflect. This is new. I’m the type of person that can accept change very easily. Sometimes I’m afraid of change, but I am able to take a step back and tell myself change is good and you cannot grow without change. These six months have been filled with change and yet for three of these months I kept telling myself I need more of a change. I felt stuck. I have no car and I couldn’t go into places or see friends even if I wanted to. It was the same thing everyday. Wake up, go on Zoom, do some homework (or wait until the due date), watch a movie, read, go to bed, and repeat. Sometimes I would go on walks and sometimes I decided to doodle in a notebook. Then it felt as if doing anything was work. I got so used to being lazy and isolated that I decided a change was necessary for me. For some reason that boiled down to me chopping my hair off. After one look, my mother immediately made a haircut appointment for me when the salons opened up in June. I didn’t think it was that bad, however, she begs to differ.

Cutting my hair did not change me mentally, but it was the start of a positive change for me. I don't know why cutting my hair made me get my shit together, but it did. I felt more motivated and for the most part I stopped lying around. I like to relax, but there's a point when it becomes unproductive. I actually started to work ahead on my school work and I am still trying to continue this habit. It turns out, not procrastinating, has proven very useful. Who knew? The past month I've decided to do some journaling and meditation and I feel like I am more at ease.

2020 has been a very difficult year for everybody. I feel fortunate to have looked back on these six months and not feel miserable. No one in my family has gotten ill or lost jobs and I am very thankful for that. I do feel like I have changed some. Nothing big, but a few small changes. I am still an optimistic person and I am still a procrastinator at my core, although I am working on that. I have had time to look back on my few months in school at the beginning of the year and really appreciate them. I don't take school for granted, but I sometimes complain about it. Now, I find complaining to be unimportant and a waste of my time. I still complain, but I'm trying to be appreciative that I have something to complain about. I hope that for the next six months, I continue to grow and I continue to look on the bright side of things.

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Journal #6

A couple months ago if I were to talk about the future, I would be scared. But right now, in this moment, I feel hopeful and optimistic about the future. I always feel pretty optimistic about the future and sometimes I'm wrong, but sometimes I'm right. There is honestly nothing reassuring me about the future. I see people without masks everywhere I go and I see parties on social media that are not practicing social distancing. Being positive about the future is really all I have. If I worry too much then I just freak myself out and what's the good in that? I can't make people wear a mask, although I wish I could. The reality is, I can't and it sucks. I know that some of my classes will still meet in person which makes me relieved yet scared at the same time. I know that I made the right decision to do my semester at Second City my senior year and I know that I might have the opportunity to do the semester in Los Angeles my senior year as well. That's all I have planned for the future and I'm hoping by my senior year that the virus will be completely gone. I've learned that if you plan too much into the future, you're only going to be disappointed. I would've never guessed that I'd be living through a pandemic in my lifetime, but here I am. I just hope somehow we can get through all of this. It pains me to see people act out because they are told to wear a mask for their own safety. My biggest fear is that a friend or family member (most importantly me!) gets the virus. I used to joke that I hoped people in large groups would get the virus at the beginning of all of this, but now I don't. I just want this thing to go away because I have a college education to finish and goals I want to accomplish. I am thankful that I am annoyed at the situation and not grieving for the loss of someone close. I really hope that my optimism isn't delusion and that everything will somehow get better.