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Semester Project

There has been an immeasurable amount of loss and devastation over the last year and a half. Everyone on the planet will come out of this a changed person whether it is conscious or unconscious, and I want to embrace that! As we hopefully start to move out of the pandemic, I want to have a deeper understanding of what I find important in life so I can really lean into the joys of it. I think before the pandemic I just swiftly moved through life and didn't put enough value onto every part of it, we took everything for granted because it was all a given! I didn't think twice about seeing my family over holidays or even being able to see people's smiles in dance class. Because of quarantine, there are some things I want to permanently change to improve every part of my life. I want to realize that the time I spend with people can sometimes come few and far between so I need to cherish every moment I spend with loved ones, even if it doesn't seem like an important event. Another important thing I have learned from this pandemic is the significance of finding new things that bring me joy. I have found a new love for reading and painting that I might not ever have found if it wasn't for quarantine and I want to continue to find new passions and diversify my interests, instead of sitting in what I know and never expanding. I am a different person that has different values because of COVID and I want to take a step back and appreciate some of the good that has come from all of the loss.

As we have obviously seen over the past year, spending time with your loved ones is not always guaranteed. Not even seeing your friends or acquaintances is set in stone, this is a harsh reality we all had to face this year. This lack of human interaction and connection really made me realize how much I took for granted when it came to seeing people that I love. From now on I want to recognize the importance of these interactions and not take them for granted! If I get to

see someone for half an hour, I don't want to brush it off, I want to be excited that I get to talk to them and see their face. I think the direct effect of this is a better understanding of how much people mean to each other, it helps you express gratitude for the small things because those are sometimes the most important.

I'm majoring in musical theater, and there hasn't been any theater the past year and almost everyone in the industry was out of work. That was a really scary reality, to realize that theater isn't permanent and your passion could just disappear. That's why I decided that it's necessary to have other passions. I want to explore what I love so I can do more things that bring me joy! I now think that we shouldn't just put all of ourselves into one thing, because we are versatile beings and should be willing to get uncomfortable to find new happiness! If I would have told myself 2 years ago that I am a frequent reader I think I would have been very confused. I've recently found swing dancing as an exciting new hobby that I want to continue and I am eager to continue pushing myself out of my comfort zone to be able to find joy.

I think there is a lot to learn from COVID and it's so vital to find little slivers of joy and happiness that came from these times. I know I will be forever grateful that I got to spend so much time with my family and with my little dog Pheebee before she passed away this February. I also reconnected and got close with a lot of high school friends when we started doing zoom calls almost every week. I've learned a lot about myself and I know that I want to value the time I have with the people that I love and continually find new things that bring me joy. Not only do I want to walk away from this pandemic changed, but I know that I already have changed and I want to continue on that path.