

Transcript of Interview with Josiah Collinge by Destinee Garcia

Interviewee: Josiah Collinge

Interviewer: Destinee Garcia

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Location (Interviewee): San Jose, CA

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Abstract:

This interview includes descriptions from on point of view about the time before the pandemic, in the beginning stages of the pandemic and changes that have occurred after the pandemic. It also reflects the changes in communities as well as personal daily lives.

Destinee Garcia 0:00

Today's date is May 3, 2021. I'm here with Josiah Collinge who will be my guest interviewee for the COVID-19 oral history project. Hi Josiah, how are you?

Josiah Collinge 0:14

Doing well.

Destinee Garcia 0:15

Okay, so um we're just going to get into the background questions first. So the first one I have is what are the primary things you do on a day to day basis. So for example, your job, your extracurricular activities, etc, anything that you want to let us know.

Josiah Collinge 0:36

Aside from working, day to day activities would consist of rock climbing, a lot of hiking and backpacking um and a little bit of family get togethers.

Destinee Garcia 0:49

Okay. So, where do you live? And who do you live with? And what is it like to live there?

Josiah Collinge 0:57

Right now I live in beautiful San Jose with my parents. And the environment is very relaxed and comfortable and spacious, it's not cramped, it's not uncomfortable, but it's a nice little dwelling.

Destinee Garcia 1:14

Good. So when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? How have your thoughts changed since then?

Josiah Collinge 1:25

My first initial thoughts... were just like a quick little virus that'll just pass by. I didn't really worry about it. I didn't have any deep thought about it until everything escalated. And that's when I took a step back and kind of reevaluated what's necessary to be safe.

Destinee Garcia 1:51

Mmm-hmm. So do you have any issues that, um, that had you concerned the most about the pandemic?

Josiah Collinge 2:05

Not with myself, but I guess, my family. I was really concerned with my family, my mom who's at high risk, and my grandparents who are at high risk as well. So those were my main concern, and of course, my father, too, but my main concern was people, my family, not necessarily myself, because I know, I'll most likely will push through and fight it if I get it. But my family members I was really concerned for them.

Destinee Garcia 2:32

Yeah, um, so I just have a few questions about your employment before COVID-19, and after COVID-19, and in what ways.

Josiah Collinge 2:49

Um, prior to COVID, I worked in an office. And once COVID hit, they shifted me to work from home, which was a really great amenity. But the overall atmosphere was it was just not a professional environment. So my whole entire workflow was slowed down only because of like, you know, distractions from home. And then just having that amenity just kind of opens up a new door to get other things done. But, uh, later on in the year, I did get released, dismissed from my job, not COVID related, but that also affected uh that's probably when it affected me the most because now I have no job. And finding a job during the pandemic is a little bit tough. So I kind of took an initiative of, you know being in a pandemic, and I started school. And with school, that's very much so affected. In terms of like not being able to go into class, I do have one day where I'm able to go into lab. But, um, the amount of time I'm in the in person, uh, training is not enough time for me to absorb all the material. So COVID has really put a ding on both work and school, but it's definitely manageable, like everyone's pulling through.

Destinee Garcia 4:27

Yeah, so you're saying that your employment status changed, right? Like you lost your job, not because of COVID but, um, it kind of gave you like a new pathway, right?

Josiah Collinge 4:42

Yeah, at first it was a setback. I didn't know where to go. I didn't know where to apply to. And it was a setback, of course and then that's when I just got a spring of an idea to just start school and get that ball rolling. And um, that's going really well working from home. And one day of lab and that's it works. But not being in person in class and not being in or not having a lot of days of lab is kind of a setback. So overall, a setback.

Destinee Garcia 5:20

Yeah. So do you have any concerns about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy more broadly?

Josiah Collinge 5:32

In terms of employment, I'm not too worried about it. I figure once I graduate from school and start my trade, things will clear up and be a lot more stable, especially now that the vaccine came out. Economically, um, that's a tough one to answer. When COVID first hit, everything dropped, all the stocks, all the markets dropped. But I feel like that would have been a great opportunity to invest the first stimulus check to like, make mad money, but then that there comes the other problem, the stimulus check, like, we've gotten all this money from this relief package. But we have to return the money at one like one way or another and balance it out. So I feel like that's gonna cause struggles in the future as a nation, and probably even globally, because everywhere else, like they had their own, like, packages, or relief packages. So in terms of the economy, I'm pretty sure we can pull through, I feel like there might be a little bit of a recession, a little bit of a setback, but I'm pretty sure we can get back on our feet. But in terms of like, the markets, everything's doing pretty well. As of right now, so it's just like a wait and see scenario.

Destinee Garcia 7:01

Yeah. So, aside from yourself, has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment of people you know and in what ways?

Josiah Collinge 7:13

Yeah, a lot of my friends and family have been affected, for example, my girlfriend. She works in a restaurant business. And then once COVID hit, she couldn't work for a little while because everything was just canceled. And especially for her, she being a host and a server. There's no indoor dining or any dining at all, so she had to not work at all. And then my mom, of course, she works at Costco. She's a main frontline worker. So it was tough for her because she's high risk. And it was a little bit of a hardship, her getting acclimated to this new work environment, with making sure everyone's been safe and taking the right protocols to mitigate the chances of getting COVID especially at her workplace. There's been like a lot of um, uh a good handful of people testing positive, and even a few deaths and that's pretty scary. But that's about it. Yes.

Destinee Garcia 8:27

Yeah. Um, so now I'm going to move on to like family and household questions related to family and household. So has COVID-19 affected you and your or your family's day to day activities?

Josiah Collinge 8:47

Yes, it has, um, first well for myself, I gyms closed so I can no longer go rock climbing. And a lot of parks closed down. So I couldn't go backpacking. A lot of general activities around town closed, couldn't do anything. And same with family, my mom backpacks she can no longer do that for a little while. Sister she likes to go out with her friends to the beach, to various little music, amusement parks, closed so in terms of like day to day activities, affected really badly. But we all worked together and we pulled through. And I feel like that brings out a lot more opportunities to do at home. Like I noticed now that a lot of these quote unquote distractions are gone. We have more time at home to get a lot of things done around the house and that was really nice to kind of fall in love with your dwelling, with your home, and take care of it, keep your mind off of everything and make you feel happy.

Destinee Garcia 10:10

Yeah. Um, so the day to day activities that you had before COVID-19 I know we're like towards the, not the end of the pandemic, but like, um after quarantine and everything. How are you now managing your day to day activities in your household? Have you picked up anything new? Do you have any new activities? And I know a lot of things are open now to the public. So is there stuff that you're getting back into more now? Yeah.

Josiah Collinge 10:51

For starters, backpacking and hiking, now that restrictions are being let loose, and everything is opening up again, backpacking and hiking are is definitely at the top of the food chain. But recently, I've kind of been devoting time to working out building muscle mass and learning how to box just so I can get out of that stay at home vegetative state that I've been in the past two months within the pandemic. And in terms of rock climbing, the gyms are still closed, so I can't tackle that. But it's definitely a big relief that everything is opening up. So it's a little bit not a little bit, it's very nice to be able to go out to the boardwalk or to various locations to go eat in or..

Destinee Garcia 11:46

So has the COVID-19 outbreak affected how you associated and communicated with friends and family. Like before quarantine, like you can, I guess, tell us how you how close you were with your friends and family. And then after or before or during quarantine, how you communicate communicated with them, then.

Josiah Collinge 12:16

In terms of communication, nothing really has changed with me, I usually just shoot a text or give calls. So there's not a lot of like face to face interaction. But in terms of like hanging out, and socializing, of course, that's been affected, like we're all worried. So we stay six feet apart, we do our best to sanitize and stay clean and do everything we can to stay safe. Though, at the beginning of course, everyone's been very cautious, but I feel like people got more complacent and kind of let loose and I feel like that kind of brought various little COVID spikes. So as for communication, not much has changed, but essentially just less physical interaction.

Destinee Garcia 13:13

So were you seeing your friends during the quarantine um or were you quarantine quarantining yourself from your friends? How did that work? Like..

Josiah Collinge 13:33

I tried my best to stay away from friends for a little while just to do my part in stopping the spread of COVID. And, you know, of course I do my little quarantines if I hang out with people and then my girlfriend would religiously tell me to stay clean, stay away from people and that really helped kind of just set in that new lifestyle I suppose, of living within this pandemic.

Destinee Garcia 14:08

Okay, um, so, overall, what have been like the biggest challenges that you faced during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Josiah Collinge 14:21

Biggest challenges probably being at home and the mental challenges of just being in solitude being stuck in your head. A lot has happened last year, both bright and dark. And getting over those mental obstacles when everything's closed, and there's a virus out there, it was tough. It was really tough to get over these like these hurdles. So that's pretty much it, just the isolation and those dark mental thoughts that I needed to clear out, was really tough when nothing's open to kind of let loose or to seek wisdom or so forth.

Destinee Garcia 15:19

Yeah. Okay, so I'm gonna be moving on to questions about like your community and like where you reside at. So we're both living in San Jose right now. Um, so in your own community, where you live at how is the COVID-19 outbreak affected your community in general. So um, um, you're welcome to speak about any community that you're part of also. So like, a club, a school community, a job community, anything.

Josiah Collinge 16:05

Um. All around within the little groups and communities I'm in, especially with little backpacking groups, COVID just abolished all of them, all of the future plans and events. No, like interacting, no socializing. So it's really tough. And really sad to see, you know, everyone in my community within San Jose, and then within my own like personal interest groups have to cancel all of their plans. For example, I was supposed to go to a concert with my girlfriend, a few concerts throughout the year, they all got canceled. And I was supposed to go on backpacking trips with a few people, that got canceled, and then a lot of the groups on social media with social. Yeah, so a lot of, excuse me, a lot of the groups on my social media, they all abandoned ship and everything, everything was just gone. COVID just wiped out everything. Granted, a few months later, once things started opening up, things started popping back up and the ball is rolling. But it was just fighting fire with fire like, either be safe, or, or not, it's best to just stay safe. And it really sucks seeing communities not network and socialize and fellowship.

Destinee Garcia 17:47

So have you seen like the people around you change their opinions or day to day activities or relationships in response to the pandemic?

Josiah Collinge 17:57

I know some people don't take it seriously, which kind of sucks because they ended up getting COVID. And then I know a few people who take it very seriously and they're doing really well. And I know a few people who took it seriously and they ended up getting COVID. So, in terms of like people changing their lifestyle, it varies from person to person. But for the most part, a lot of them just shifted their whole entire dynamic and how they stay clean and healthy and how they just socialize with others. Everything moved online. So it was nice to still have that socializing aspect, especially through zoom, but the in person interaction was a no go.

Destinee Garcia 18:48

Um, yeah, so there's two key ideas. So there's this saying of self-isolation, and also flattening the curve, which have highly emerged during the pandemic. We hear it all the time now. So how have you, your family, friends and community responded to requests to self-isolate and flatten the curve? Meaning like, if you if you're unaware of what that means, it's basically trying to make sure that the number of COVID cases are remaining stable or declining.

Josiah Collinge 19:44

In terms of just especially within my family, like our, in terms of like flattening out the curve, and social isolation, we all just did our part and we just buckled down and stayed safe. There's one point where we're itching for some kind of like brain, good brain juices flowing something new and fresh instead of just doing the same old, same old. So my family did pick up a dog safely. And the little pup has been keeping us good company during the social, the social social isolation and stay at home orders. And that really helped tremendously.

Destinee Garcia 20:37

Okay, um, last question relating to your community has COVID-19 changed your relationships with any family or friends, or community, and in what ways?

Josiah Collinge 20:53

Relationships with family, everything has been the same, with friends it was 50/50 like friends, some friends, like did didn't take too much care. So I would like pull away not hang around them as often or how they are treating themselves and how they're handling the pandemic, like I stay away from the toxic people, and healthy people. And of course, with the healthy people, I would like associate like talk to safely over the phone. So it's nice to have that interaction. And with family, nothing has changed relationship, it was a little bit a little rocky in terms of just figuring out what's the safest approach because in the end, it's a team effort. It's team work. And once everything got organized, and a little routine was going, everything was pretty smooth. Everything still is smooth. Yeah.

Destinee Garcia 21:59

Good. So I'm going to move on to health questions. And just to remind you, there is a um, there is the HIPAA. So if you can just hold back from talking more in depth about somebody's health. But you can talk in general. So have you or anybody you've known gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak, what has been your experience in responding to the sickness. And again, like if you are uncomfortable about answering any of the health questions you are more than welcome to not share anything. Just make sure that you are not sharing any personal health information and to remain that private.

Josiah Collinge 22:51

As for general getting sick during the COVID pandemic, it's really scary. In December, I got a really bad fever. And I got a little cough, I got really scared and I took my COVID test, negative. So that was nice to know that I came out negative. But a month or two later, one of my friends got COVID. And that was really scary because a week and a half ago, prior to them getting COVID, we went out to dinner when everything started opening up just to let loose and kind of get the brain juices flowing. And he ended up getting COVID. Thankfully, I did not get sick and acquire the disease. But it was pretty much a wake-up call. They did their part to make sure they're clean and they sheltered and they did their little quarantine. And as for me, I just continued making sure I'm safe. So all in all they handled it well. They're doing well right now. But essentially wake up call. Be more safe. Wear your mask, sanitize. Keep social distancing.

Destinee Garcia 24:18

So just to clarify, you said that you got sick in December?

Josiah Collinge 24:22

Correct in December.

Destinee Garcia 24:24

Uh huh. And did you think you had COVID?

Josiah Collinge 24:26

Yes, 100%. I got really worried I woke up with a high fever and my sense of taste slightly changed. And I had a weird little feeling in my throat and I was really concerned. So I took my COVID test ASAP. But right after I took the test, the symptoms just went away really quick. And then my test results came in and it's negative. So it was a little bit of a chill bug. The, I believe it was from staying out late one night just being outside in the cold. I feel like that affected me, that gave me like a little bit of a chilly bug. But it went away fast. It was a little, a little weird fever spike.

Destinee Garcia 25:25

So as we're talking about this, um, do you think that people were more on edge about getting sick during the whole pandemic? Like, what's your opinion? Like? 'Cuz I know that you said that you got scared? Because you thought it was COVID? Do you think people were more, more scared about if they got sick? What they would have? Yeah, your thoughts on that?

Josiah Collinge 26:06

Most definitely, I feel like everybody's worried, especially if they get like a small little cough or a small little fever, it'll arise a lot of concern, especially since the virus is really tricky. Some people get the virus and they have no symptoms, some people get the virus and they have really bad symptoms. So when one gets sick, of course, it's gonna be a very bad worry about it which is a great idea to just get a COVID test and like find out ASAP, just to be safe. But now we have a vaccine rolled out. So I feel like things will be a lot more safer, but only time will tell.

Destinee Garcia 26:57

Yeah. And were you personally getting COVID tests often, especially since your mom worked at Costco and during the whole quarantine, when the pandemic was more worse.

Josiah Collinge 27:23

Most definitely, I would get a COVID test quite often, especially after any big events. Like once everything starts opening up, I started going backpacking. And after backpacking, I would take a COVID test or if I go on like a little road trip, just to go on a drive, I'll get a COVID test. And pretty much a lot of tests, I did have to take surge, get surgery last year, and I had to take a lot of COVID tests for that just for precaution. So a lot of COVID tests just to be safe.

Destinee Garcia 28:09

So in terms of COVID-19 what ways do you think that it's affecting people's mental and or physical health?

Josiah Collinge 28:20

In terms of COVID-19 I think it varies person to person. Depends on how much resistance you have in this discipline you have to stay in a healthy mindset and headspace. I know a few people who've had normal lives, and they're doing fine and the pandemic hit and then there's whole their whole entire headspace and their whole entire dynamic changed. And now they're like, you know, a whole unhealthy aura and an unhealthy space. And then I have a few friends who utilize this lonesome time and this shelter in place time to alter their headspace to something more healthier, more fruitful. And I feel like it just varies from person to person. Some people take it really well some people take it really bad. Yeah, that's about it.

Destinee Garcia 29:21

Yeah. So now um, the next set of questions are going to be questions about like information and how you're gaining your information about the pandemic. So what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic, so anything from like websites to um to news articles or um physical like newspapers, things like that.

Josiah Collinge 29:55

So my main source for so for general news, just simple Facebook, just for quick like little updates for something more personal with people's experiences where people are like doing Reddit, Reddit is like an awesome spot to kind of figure out what is going on. In general, Reddit is like a very powerful source to um, to like, figure out how to manage through the pandemic. It's a very social platform that's safe to use, and you can talk to other people and you can really get that network and socializing, juice flowing. But general news, Facebook, Reddit for more personal experiences, and then general Google searches, just if I need to know something like off topic, or just a quick fact check.

Destinee Garcia 30:57

Okay. So how have your new sources changed during the course of the pandemic? Like, do you find other sites more reliable than any other sources?

Josiah Collinge 31:15

Um, no, everything's mean, it just depends on like what news outlet you follow, like, via Facebook, I follow pretty much all the news outlets from Fox news to CNN to local news. So it's just fascinating to see how they report all their information, and how they present their factual space. So it gives you like a whole insight and you kind of pick and choose. But the real meat and gravy is Reddit, because that's where people like socialize and talk about it. And I feel like

that's like a very powerful source to go to for any information or experiences. Just because you have like regular people to really smart doctors and scientists that are all just engaged in talking.

Destinee Garcia 32:18

Okay, interesting. So do you think that there are important issues that the media is or is not covering about the pandemic?

Josiah Collinge 32:31

I think for the most part a lot, a lot of the news outlets and sources are getting the main point across, though we do have a few of them that are kind of biased with, you know, not wearing your mask and then some are more in depth about being safe. So I feel like I said earlier it just varies from outlet to outlet. Some of them are more complete- complacent and not as strict. Whereas some of them are more worried and more more in favor of making sure everyone's like safe.

Destinee Garcia 33:20

Right. And getting the information, right?

Josiah Collinge

Yeah. Like.

Destinee Garcia

Yeah. Okay, so the next set of questions are going to be about governmental. So, um, have municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

Josiah Collinge 33:41

Just like every other community, and even nation like just they just put in lockdown orders and social distancing protocols. So it, it's just like, same thing, same, same, but different. Some places, they're a little bit more loose on restrictions, but for the most part, everyone did have their lockdown and got to wear your mask, sanitize. Of course, we have some of those people who don't care, but we just got to continue to do our part to make sure we're all safe.

Destinee Garcia 34:18

Mmm-hmm. So do you have any thoughts on how local state or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently?

Josiah Collinge 34:27

Not any thoughts. Oh, I would say probably with the restaurant businesses, like, my quick thought is how they're kind of handling it. I mean, of course, when the fir- pandemic first hit, gotta be safe, lockdown. But there's just so much like restrictions for the restaurant business that

I feel like it's greatly affecting local businesses. And for example, a local business right across the corner from my house, Zamora's, they got shut down. Because everything was just too strict. And even though they were following all the rules, like, they're losing so much money, like there has to be like, there has to be something to like, keep business flowing specifically with the restaurant business. People have to make money, they have to feed their families pay their bills, and having the restaurants closed down often is just not helping. And I feel like a lot of the leaders are kind of dismissing facts like you can have a grocery store, you can have Costco open and there's so many people flooding into Costco. And then you can't have like a restaurant open and have everything like, distanced around and like scattered around. And you just got to close it. But you can have all these other businesses that are open which is kind of ridiculous, but everything's, everything's opening back up. So I'm not too worried about that anymore, but kind of bummed out about local businesses going out of business.

Destinee Garcia 36:24

Mmm-hmm. Definitely. And it kind of leads to the next set of questions or the last set of questions, which is the future and what the future holds. So in your own experience of the whole pandemic and lockdown and quarantine, has your experience transformed the way you think about your friends, family and community and in what ways?

Josiah Collinge 36:57

I'd, yeah, it affected everybody all the way around. Like with me personally, I've gained some friends, I lost some friends. Within the pandemic. I pushed away more of like the toxic people, the people who are in bad headspaces and I kind of just associated myself more with the people who are in a more healthier headspace, so, and that led me to meet new people via online or safely, social distancing, for example, going out to eat at a local spot to support businesses. But um, my thoughts are pretty neutral. I mean, it is what it is you just got to be safe. Vaccines are rolling out. So that's awesome. But everyone's doing pretty well. Now pretty neutral now.

Destinee Garcia 37:54

So do you think differently of anything now that you have gone through this experience in your life? Are you more thankful for things? Are you more aware of things?

Josiah Collinge 38:12

Yes, so my whole entire thought process how I think definitely changed and made me more aware made on a on a whole entire like, field on a whole spectrum of things. That made me more aware of like the politics more aware of how this virus works and how other viruses works and made me more aware of my own habits. So how I think drastically changed for the better. Definitely a lot better headspace than I was prior to pandemic and a lot better health like the way I think has been maturing day by day. So I'm pretty happy with my progress.

Destinee Garcia 38:57

Okay, well good. Um, next question is how does this pandemic compare to other big events that have happened in your lifetime?

Josiah Collinge 39:05

I don't even think I can compare it. So in terms of like other viruses, such as Ebola or H1N1, yeah, they got big but it was contained really quickly and I thought that's what would happen with Coronavirus. I thought it would kind of like spread out but then we'll like it'll get contained. The line will fly in but it didn't it just shot right up and everything got out of hand. So, in comparison COVID definitely, it was pretty bad it spread really bad, especially when the symptoms have varied between people, various people. So definitely a tough hardship there. But, uh, we're pulling through.

Destinee Garcia 40:03

Okay. What can you imagine your life being like in a year?

Josiah Collinge 40:12

In a year, things will hopefully be more open, more normal. Gyms will be open. In a year, I'll have a brand new job. In a year I'll be pretty steady financially, mentally and physically.

Destinee Garcia 40:43

Okay. So last question. Knowing what you know now after experiencing all this and going through this pandemic, what do you think that individuals, communities and or governments need to keep in mind for the future? And if anything like this ever happens again.

Josiah Collinge 41:04

I think after the COVID experience everyone will be set in stone and ready for the next one like ready for the next one if it were to come around. We all are now smarter with being clean, being safe. We all learned a big lesson, we all learned our lessons. So, in the future we'll know. We'll be prepared. Especially with how governments and economies are handled, like, everything will definitely be a lot more smoother because this took us by surprise. So the next one will we'll be able to fight it easier and get it um, get it under control more smoothly.

Destinee Garcia 41:54

Okay, perfect. Well thank you for your time. And this concludes the COVID-19 interview. So thank you Josiah.

Josiah Collinge 42:08

And thank you Destinee for having me. It's a pleasure to talk to you.

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