

## **Transcript of Interview with Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru by Each Other**

**Interviewee/Interviewer:** Elizabeth Lattanzi

**Interviewee/Interviewer:** Uma Bhandaru

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**Abstract:** Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru take turns answering questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. They discuss life before and after the pandemic, the political climate surrounding COVID-19, and share what they learned during quarantine.

**Elizabeth Lattanzi** 0:00

This is our COVID-19 Archive Project interview one. My name is Elizabeth Lattanzi, and I consent to being interviewed.

**Uma Bhandaru** 0:08

My name is Uma Bhandaru, and I consent to being interviewed. So, to begin, let's start off with how do you define or remember your last day of normal life?

**Elizabeth Lattanzi** 0:21

I remember my last day of normal life, when I was in school, and a lot of the kids in my school were planning a walkout because they were upset that there was this new virus going around, yet we were still in school, where it could potentially be unsafe. So I remember kind of being conflicted, you know, do I walk out or do I go through the day and kind of see my teachers again, like in, check in, it was it was definitely very conflicting. But I definitely wish I took more advantage of it because it was, it really was my last day of normal life,

**Uma Bhandaru** 0:52

For sure. And really similar to you, I remember really distinctively, it was a Thursday afternoon, it was the second last class of the day, and they made a big announcement over our entire school system saying, take everything with you, get, go to your locker, go to your gym locker, just take everything. We're not coming to school tomorrow. And I think the way that I was headed already instilled a little bit of confusion, a little fear, but the thought that I wouldn't set foot in my school for almost a year later. I don't think that was even in my mind when that announcement came. So it was definitely crazy to look back on now and see that was my last day of normal life too. Kind of branching into once we started the pandemic, how has your definition, definition of isolation changed?

**Elizabeth Lattanzi** 1:39

I feel like at first, like, you know, the last day of normal life and going back into going into a quarantine, it was definitely kind of embedded in fear a little bit just because we didn't know what was going on, everything was still unknown. So I think isolation at first was definitely kind of a scary thought. But I think that isolation now, the term has definitely changed. You know, I, when someone says that they're in isolation, I, you know, definitely think that that person's being safe and taking safe precautions. And, you know, it's, it's definitely a more respectful term, just because, you know, we got to keep everyone safe and keep the population safe at large, because we realize how important it is to do so.

**Uma Bhandaru 2:22**

I agree, I totally agree with you. I think that prior to the pandemic, the term isolation had definitely more of a negative connotation around it than I think, today, on the other hand, it's much more positive seeing you're doing something that will help the general public if you are sick, or you feel sick, isolation is one of the most safe measures you can take to not only help yourself, but also to help other people. So I definitely think my definition of isolation has become more positive through the pandemic and over time. So I personally did not learn about pandemics prior to COVID-19. I heard a little bit about Ebola, I heard be a little bit about plagues in the past, but did you ever study or learn about a pandemic prior to COVID-19?

**Elizabeth Lattanzi 3:08**

I think in middle school, I learned you know, it was definitely just a small lesson during the year that we learned about the bubonic plague. But if anything that I took away from that, when I was younger, it was that it was a long time ago. And you know, this was before healthcare systems were really well established. And this was before, you know, we had all these new technologies and information about diseases and all the research that has been conducted since then. So I feel like back then learning about pandemics was kind of more of a , this happened in the past, it was very historic. But I definitely think the way we teach the topic in the future will change just because now we've learned it can really happen in any capacity, no matter how well equipped we are and no matter what technology we have access to.

**Uma Bhandaru 3:55**

You know, I really liked that you said that. Growing up, you thought it was so far in the past, it almost made it feel like this whole concept of pandemics, it was so detached from reality. And the thought of “this can happen again,” seemed impossible to me. And when this pandemic hit, it felt so odd because of all the public health officials, all the rules, all the practices we follow. It made it seem almost that we're always vulnerable, regardless of how much time has passed or will pass. So I definitely think that that idea of pandemics were only in the past has definitely changed, seeing how it's always going to be in like the back of our society, waiting to come back. So during the pandemic, you know, it was a big year, it was election year, millions of people were unemployed, they lost their jobs. Do you think any sector of life in particular was hit the hardest politically, socially, economically, religiously, anything like that?

**Elizabeth Lattanzi 4:52**

I definitely think there was a lot of political tension, especially with it like you said being an election year, but I think people politically there was, it was a very heated environment just because so many people were trying to contribute to finding a solution. And you know, not every approach was agreed by everyone. So it was a lot of, you know, tension being portrayed on the media. And I feel like a lot of people have just become more politically aware since then. And I think that's definitely really important. But yeah, I think the way that people kind of approach the pandemic at first was definitely very polarized and, and very- it had a lot of tension.

**Uma Bhandaru 5:32**

Exactly. You know, I also think this idea of being aware, it really showcased how through the pandemic, politically, socially, how many more millennials have become aware of the current

events in our world, and just the news, and whether- whatever opinion, they form from the information provided, it's safer to say that, you know, we're all becoming more aware of just what's around us and how I think we won't go back to being as uninformed as we were before. And I think that's taught me personally a lot about myself, you know, going through watching the news every day with my family. It's definitely made me understand more about politics, more about life, and just more about myself personally. And I think that stems really well into our last question, which is, you know, what has quarantine made you realize about yourself, and about a year and a half later, how do you think you've adjusted to life.

**Elizabeth Lattanzi 6:23**

I feel like quarantine has taught us a lot about how to kind of respond to the way that the world is, had, is, the events that are happening in the world right now. And I think a year and a half later, I feel like everyone has kind of gone under sort of, you know, belief change and value change. And, you know, we've kind of looked towards our families to kind of instill kind of faith in us. But I definitely think now, a year and a half later, you really just kind of keep, you know, being safe, and, you know, listening to local health officials and entrusting the research that you know, what they're doing is really important.

**Uma Bhandaru 7:02**

Exactly. I think that, you know, what we learned about ourselves definitely relates to just the timeline of how much time has passed since the pandemic first started and where we are today. I feel that you know, personally, I'm much more aware, I'm much more cautious of who I'm around. And these traits I think today have helped me adjust more to pandemic life and life in general. Just like you were saying, you know, it's definitely taught us a lot about ourselves and our environment. So yeah, it was really great talking to you.

**Elizabeth Lattanzi 7:32**

It was great talking to you too.