

13 May 2020

Palmdale, California

Learning that I would have to go back home, unwillingly, because my classes were no longer face- to- face was a very difficult concept to deal with. I am a 19 year old Pansexual Chicana who grew up in a household where nobody really ever left and what we did was around the Christian faith. The idea of going back was bittersweet, I knew I would have to stay indoors with my family. That can be a bit much when it comes to personal space and the importance of education. Being here for so many weeks I have noticed how much my family has changed and how old habits have not died. Getting to stay in my home reminded me of what I missed the most, being inside I learned more about each family member and made me realize how I have changed as well. It feels as though I am in a movie where the girl tries to run away from her problems but she ends up being grounded by her family and she realizes they actually do love her and the world is not totally against her.

My family has not taken the same approach as many other families, mine is quite special. My family believes that if they only hang out with people they know, such as one another they are okay and they will go on about their day and holidays. So far I have seen my family for my Mom's birthday, Mother's day and plans for my cousin's graduation, all of which is a bit more than twenty people. As many more news comes out about extending the stay- at -home order to the end of May and now not until august, it is hard not to include myself in the reason why the extension is needed. Recently I saw a video of how the social distancing works, where they use a line of matches and begin to light one of the matches and as many were being burned for being so close to one another all it took was one match to step out of the line to save the rest. If my

family was to stop having social gatherings would they also help with flattening a curve, but the dilemma comes from not seeing my family in so long and that guilt to put my family first.

My culture and this pandemic have not been able to totally agree, many of my friends who share the same culture have also struggled with being with family. If we were to not go celebrate we would have the fear of missing out especially with my older family members who are at most at risk. My siblings and Dad have questioned my hesitates to visit people like my grandfather who had just left the hospital in late February. Their excuses vary from already having the virus and having antibodies, which in retrospect they seem to believe they cannot get in again which has been disproved. After this argument comes and goes the idea that he won't have much time left is argued.

Although there have been instances that have shown positive aspects of having to be with family there are other factors that have had significant roles during this time and my stress. Looking at the future I have to worry about where I want to go to school, if I want to live on-campus if I have the choice, and most importantly when I am going back to work. I work at a Macy's in the Downtown Commons of Sacramento and my job is a job but it was a source of income. My life has gone through a complete change, other than myself I have to think about my girlfriend and her well being and my true well being. It is scary learning about people going back to work and getting sick, people protesting for jobs to open again and to go about how they were is dangerous. The worst has yet to come, many still say the "Big Hit" is yet to come and when it will come more people will die, people we did not think would be affected will be. At this moment I want to work, I want to see my family, I want to be able to have more answers when it comes to what I am supposed to do and when I am supposed to do it.

I have been enjoying gardening, spending time with my immediate family, spending time with my girlfriend and getting to know myself more. I am able to take time out of my day and take into realization how much I need to think about my future and what I want to do with my life.