

Life During a Pandemic

As I sit at my computer staring at a blinking cursor I cannot help but think about the positives and negatives that have occurred over the last couple months. The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected people in multiple ways and here is a summary of my experiences. Between my work and my personal life, I have made drastic changes. For me it all started on February 29, 2020.

I woke up with a fever, cough, aches and pains, all the typical symptoms of the flu. By Monday, I was feeling worse so I called and talked to my boss, luckily, she is a physician. Her first thought was “Coronavirus”. She instructed me to stay home and call my physician’s office. After the first week stuck at home with the flu, everyone in my office was worried that I was infected with the Coronavirus. Their worries turned into fears, what if I was infected, I might have exposed it to them. If I did, how was I exposed? As you see, I work at a medical school and our medical students have been working in hospitals and clinics around Phoenix and may have been exposed to this new virus everyone was talking about. As the second week approached, I kept getting worse. Everyone wanted me to go get tested for Coronavirus but I knew that I did not meet the criteria for being tested. At the end of the second week, I finally had to go visit my family physician and I was right. They could not test me for the Coronavirus. They took chest x-rays showing I was positive for pneumonia and I was placed on two different antibiotics, I was finally feeling better towards the end of week three. I was ready to go back to work, however, that would not be the case.

On March 11, 2020, the Governor of Arizona issued a Public Health State of Emergency and by March 30th he placed an Executive Order and everyone was instructed to stay at home. Schools, churches, restaurants, gyms were all closed and our lives were changed. Since I had already been working from home for the last month, I had a temporary work station set up on our dining room table. As the weeks started to go by, I started to notice the negative impacts with staying at home 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Work Life balance lines began to blur, everything seems to come together. With my son and mother living with me, we were all stuck at home together. I could no longer go to the gym and work out, the last time we saw my sister and her family was the beginning of February, birthday and graduation parties were no longer happening and Easter Sunday was cancelled. My mother being a religious woman was very upset that she could not spend Easter with her daughters and their families.

Some people were looking at the negative events that were happening to our lives, I decided I not only wanted but needed to look at the positive impacts. My 23-year-old son who would normally spend his mornings working out at the gym, his days at work and evenings on the basketball court was now working from home and creating a home gym. My son and I have enjoyed watching movies together, watching old basketball games and having long talks about everything; spending quality family time together. A major positive impact is we both have noticed that we are saving money. My 31-year-old daughter has sent me videos and pictures of my granddaughter helping her plant flowers and plants in their garden. We may not be together but I am still able to share in their memories. I have also noticed I have more time to study for my online courses resulting in better grades on exams and assignments. I found a nice quiet

place in our house to meditate and send healing messages to those on the front lines taking care of the people effected by the Coronavirus.

We have all been effected by the Coronavirus Pandemic in one way or another. It is what we do with our time together. Spending precious time with the ones we love is so important and making precious memories during a time of frustration and confusion. One day our children will be adults and moved out of our houses, our parents will be gone, friends and family members will have moved away. We will always remember the 2020 Pandemic, do not take this time for granted, make this time count. I know once the Executive Order is removed and we can leave our houses and they finally open restaurants, gyms, churches and other public spaces back up, I will return to the office, spending 10-hour days behind my desk and my son will be running around town doing a hundred different things. I will always remember this time and the memories we have made together. Spending quality time with my mother as she gets older and frailer.

Thank you for sharing in my experience as I embark on day 60 staying at home.