New Normal

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*Keep a notebook. Travel with it, eat with it, sleep with it. Slap into it every stray thought that flutters up into your brain. Cheap paper is less perishable than gray matter. And lead pencil markings live beyond memory.* —Jack London

Chronicling my life may be an important future reference. What we handle tomorrow may differ from our struggles today, and there is always something to learn from our experiences. The Coronavirus now has a global impact that everyone has to adjust to. The switch to online learning has given the world a new lifestyle that would’ve otherwise stayed the same if this pandemic didn’t hit. Staying home and practicing social distancing has become the new normal. While doing so is for the good of all humanity, we really can’t say in isolation forever. Whether for economic reasons or simply out of boredom, this ‘new’ normal will eventually change too. Luckily, I was quick to adjust. I was staying 6 feet apart from people before it was even necessary. Was I extra cautious? No, I just like to stay home. Despite my personal life not changing drastically, I do hope to share my new experiences in writing so if it ever needed, my voice will have been captured.

Apart but Together

 During this time of social distancing, I am keeping my daily routine as natural as possible while still acknowledging what is happening in the outside world. Social Distancing is now a must and involves staying clear of physical contact, especially if one is sick. Luckily, I am not one for going to social gatherings. Playing video games online is basically how I socialize. Staying indoors is what I do, and things have stayed relatively the same for me. However, there are notable changes in my family life. For one, my sister is not living in San Diego anymore and is now finishing her university work here at home, like the rest of us. Now I get to watch more television together with my sis. Another change at home is that my mom is working less frequently and home more often. She doesn’t have the luxury of doing her work online as a factory worker so it’s safer for her to stay home, but she is the primary money-maker in this household. As for my dad, he is already retired so he just gets to see our faces more often. It is going to get more difficult as we continue to live in isolation though. Stimulus checks are becoming increasingly important and many will come to rely on them to afford essentials. Now-a-days, the internet is considered an essential part of life. Coincidentally, an unexpected joy in this whole situation is that I got an upgrade in internet service. Spectrum was offering two free months of their internet service with no fees and I took their offer. I was already looking to switch internet service provider, their monthly cost is cheaper for faster internet, and I had all initial fees waived. Now, I know that my situation may differ from others, but it’s important to stay uplifting: “Believe it or not, this shall pass (eventually), and you will have chronicled this unprecedented time,” or so my professor says. I do agree though, as I will keep living with a hopeful and positive mind.

The Choice to be Alone

 The only typically-crowded places I dream of having all to myself are amusement parks. Lines can be unbearably long and to take advantage of the day, one has to wake up extremely early. If I were in solitude in these areas of fun, I would be able to visit every ride 3 times over and then some by the time the day is over. From Disneyland to Six Flags to Universal Studios, I can simply go up to a ride and ride it. Of course, if I had the parks to myself, I would definitely bring friends. The thing that makes rides worth the wait is the experience, but having friends tag along is an entirely new experience on its own. There is always the “scaredy-cat” of the group and having them build up the courage to go to a ride is part of that experience. It’ll just be all of us together in solitude. It is simply my preference to not be anywhere totally alone. It really makes any place feel like a ghost town, and nobody likes ghost towns. Human beings need social contact, whether physically or online. It’s the reason why one can go insane after prolonged isolation. People are already protesting to open California as many public spaces have been closed down. While I do not agree with that statement (because of our current conditions), the best things in life do involve other people. So yes, I would enjoy an amusement park in solitude but no, I would not prefer to be there alone.

The Sounds of Music

 Music is a global phenomenon that anyone can resonate with and give a sense of belonging. During this time of social distancing and isolation due to the coronavirus, music will allow oneself to become immersed in one’s feelings and connect with the lyrics/rhythm. Personally, this pandemic has not affected the music I am listening to. I will still seek out music via Spotify’s discover weekly playlist and favorite the ones that sound good to me. As I have a wide variety of music, I just let shuffle play determine the feel of the song and I jam out to that. Most of the time, lyrics are of importance when I am adding a song to my playlist. I like something catchy or a rhythm that is easy to follow. The times that I do think about the lyrics, the song is probably a parody of my favorite video game characters. You can probably tell that I really like music, but am not emotionally connected to it. I am just not one of the many instances that are able to belong with music. For example, that time where celebrities sang “Imagine” by John Lennon to keep the hope alive during this pandemic and then got made fun of on the internet for it failing to do the one thing it was intended to do. It was supposed to be sweet, but it was not thoughtful since ironically they were singing it from their lavish houses while the most affected do not have such resources. And then there is the actual song choice. Just think of these celebrities singing “Imagine there is no heaven” while someone is fighting death against Covid-19. The response to it was so bad that it definitely brought us all together in hatred. Rant aside, the whole point of the song was for hope and that’s something music can do, when executed correctly. Music is, and will always be, a way feelings can be expressed and resonated with.

Racism at it Again

The virus itself is not the only danger, so is the inaccurate misinformation about the pandemic. One such example is that anyone of Asian descent is responsible for this outbreak. Hate crimes against Asian American have appeared all over media and shows how destructive an uninformed mind can be. The only thing that Asians have related to Covid-19 is that they originated from Asian. That’s it, not even something circumstantial. Even worse so that president Trump called COVID-19 the “Chinese virus.” Everyone is in panic but that is no reason to discriminate. No one wins, and people end up hurt. Good news is that Asian Americans are speaking out to stop this nonsense. The coronavirus is now a global virus and we must all take care of each other. The virus doesn’t discriminate so no reason why we should. Truth be told, several of the Asian American population haven’t even visited China. More so, not every place in Asia is China. It’s just so wrong how such a thing can fill someone with so much hate that they will hurt another human being without looking for the facts. And even when we find someone that is infected, we must sympathize and give them all the support we need. I’m glad there are several brave people putting their lives at risk to put a stop to this pandemic. As for the rest of us, we must remain indoors and stay informed. According to the New York Times, “Facebook, YouTube and Twitter all said they were making efforts to point people back to reliable sources of medical information, and had direct lines of communication to the W.H.O. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” As long as we stay connected, there are reliable sources to keep misinformation out. Our lives as we know it have changed drastically and we must make sure that the information we receive is correct before making any rash choices.

Stay Indoors Kids

 Life as we know it may have changed depending on who you ask. Extroverts are probably experiencing the shut-in life for the first time ever. I, on the other hand, am quite prepared to live this way. I got my dog chilling with me while I chat will my friends online and play video games. My dog is always cautious of the outdoor world and in times like these, I can relate to him. Everyday, I see the new death count on the news and it worries me just to head out. I have no clue why the person in the illustration has the same chair as I do, but I can relate. It sucks to have a chair where the arm handles are higher than the bottom part of the desk. Every time I scoot in, I hear the thud of disappointment as I bounce back to where I once was. Unlike the person in the illustration though, I did not hoard a whole mess of toilet paper. No clue why they have it on the floor without the packaging, but they are not doing their neighbors any favors. People went crazy for toilet paper as if it was the cure for the coronavirus. Social media even had to warn people to not hoard baby food to keep supply steady for everyone. It’s not the end of the world. This virus is very dangerous, but simply practice social distancing and wear masks when going outside. That’ll significantly reduce the rate of infection on its own. The life of the shut-in is not ideal, but it allows us to be safe, and that is of upmost importance.

PROMPT: HA HA!

*Is It OK to Laugh During Dark Times?*

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Joking about Today

 I knew my first year of college was going to fly by, but I didn’t know it was going to ZOOM. Yeah, that was a joke of how we all have to rely on online platforms in order to stay connected. No, I do not think it is too soon to make such a joke. Laughter is the best medicine of course, or some say. Now, for memes, there is no such thing as “too soon.” Memes live and die such like today’s hyper trends. There are a few exceptions but for the most part, memes rely on current events. So, what happens when current events are dark? Nothing, it’s business as usual. People love memes because they are simplistic and relatable. Dark humor might be just what we need to lol or exhale from our nostrils while smiling in these trying times. I personally don’t mind these coronavirus memes. It’s not necessarily to laugh to hide the pain, but more of a just giving a laugh in light of the situation type of thing. Don’t get me wrong, laughter can certainly be a coping mechanism, but I just see it more as temporary happiness you can give someone. Ever hear the phrase “It’s funny because it’s true.” Well, it’s true. There is always some way to joke about something without outright mocking it. The cheesiest way to do so is with puns. One can also use irony, but there are always those that don’t understand the joke. Good news is that some jokes are inevitable, like Avengers memes. Now you’ll have to excuse me, Mrs. Kahwaji, I don’t feel too good.

HOPEFUL

Staying indoors now

Hopeful for recovery

May God save us all

BORED

Bored out of my mind

ZOOM my friends to stay in touch

How will we survive

PREPARED

Prepared and ready

Washing my hands thoroughly

Corona away