**Being With Those Who Think of You**

The beginning of my journey began with quick certainty of what I wanted to do when Covid-19 hit the U.S. and that was to be with the people I love. On March, 11, 2020, the unexpected happened. I was about to enter a chapter in my life I had never experienced before. Covid-19, a contagious virus that quickly spreads in the air attacking those with low immune systems, was spreading quickly and because of that many people decided to be with their families and so did I.

I was in my management class about 8:00 a.m. when suddenly I saw everyone mumbling and I asked myself, what is going on? I asked my friend Luc and he said, “Classes are canceled until further notice because of Covid-19.” I did not know how to react; I immediately started to think of my family. At the moment I did not know how strong this virus could become so it was an enigma to me; I just heard it was dangerous. When I got the news I was in a period of my life that I was happy the semester was coming to an end; it would be approximately two months to finish. I was getting good grades, especially in my calculus class, which I always got bad grades in all my math classes in earlier semesters. But at the same time I was sentimental because my mom who visited for a month had to go back home to Mexico.

Furthermore, as soon as I got the news about school canceling, I called my mom and all my family letting them know about the situation that had taken place in school and that I had made the decision without hesitation that I was going to leave with my mom to Mexico. I was happy and excited because I was already planning to go in June to Mexico and with this immediate stop of in person classes I had the opportunity to go earlier. In addition it would be approximately one month of only online classes according to the school. I was blessed to be in a country that I love and be with people I love. Before that month ended and the period the school gave us to return, we were almost done buying the necessary things to take on the pandemic, such as canned foods, water, and medicine. Suddenly I received the message from our school’s Chancellor saying that they had come to a decision of suspending in person classes and making what was left of the semester strictly online. I did not know how to take the news; while I was happy with my family, I was worried I was not going to do as good in school as I would normally do. Even though I was uncertain, I knew I was with my family and that anything else should not matter because I had their support.

This pandemic took me back to be with my family, which is nice because I had moved out six years ago. Covid-19 gave me the opportunity to be with them during their birthdays and different holidays. Moving back momentarily made me feel optimistic, comfortable, and happy. Being away was hard especially since I was barely an adolescent. I did not know what I was getting into; I just felt the rush to move away. The journey of moving away has been difficult with many sacrifices such as having to be away from those you love and being a bother to others even if it was family. Covid-19 brought negative effects on people but for me it helped me realize that I was at a point that I needed time away from the U.S. I was stressed and I felt that I needed time off. If I had stayed in the U.S. I would have been in my aunt's small apartment with my two small cousins. I would have gone crazy because they were going to be home and I would not have been able to be comfortable or listen in my online classes.

Moreover, even though I am happy living in Mexico, during the beginning of the pandemic it was not that easy adapting to the online school experience. I had never experienced online classes and never signed up for them since I entered Cal State Long Beach so I was unsure how it would work. My main concern was adapting to an online environment in Mexico because it is very noisy, lots of people are selling stuff out loud, cars and motorcycles that would pass fast, and people that say hello to others they know from across the street. Consequently, I was afraid when I had to present or speak because I would bother my classmates with all that noise. So, I had to learn to manage the noises by tweaking ZOOM and setting up my room so a lot of noise would not pass through. But even though it has been tough not everything is bad with this virus because I have learned to adapt as fast as I can for future threats because we never know what can happen. This was unexpected. Other threats can come soon, so I kind of feel prepared for whatever is next thanks to Covid-19.

At the beginning of the pandemic on March, 11, 2020, seeing everything shut down shocked me; it was like all humans went extinct, like if the Earth told us to stop we need to heal our rivers, oceans, and animals. Mexico was one of the first countries besides China to move into the first phase early, it is August, 25, 2020, and I am now experiencing the second wave of Covid-19. The second wave is seeing most of the establishments opening back up, with the norms and health regulations enforced by the government. Now I am starting to see more cars and people on the streets. I can now see smiles of people going back to work or at least perceive smiles because of their health masks they have on and that makes me happy.

I am almost done with my school; I am happy I had time to be with my family and friends. For many people this has brought sadness and damages, but for me and my family it has brought us together, taking all that lost time and creating new memories. Covid-19 continues to be detrimental, but now in a smaller way in Mexico we still need to manage to follow all precautions and understand that everyone is in this together and we must protect each other.