

1. What are some of the major ways your life has changed since the crisis broke out?

My life has changed drastically since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. When the State's shelter-in-place order went into effect in the middle of March, I became more anxious about my family's health and about the limited food and cleaning supplies. Just like many people around the world, I became more conscious of the things I touched, where I was, and how far the distance was with other people, especially during my trips to purchase essential items. I felt as though I was constantly living in fear and anxiety while doing everything I could to not catch the virus.

Besides that, all of my classes were required to be online via ZOOM. Although I personally enjoy online classes as I did at my prior community college, I find it harder to concentrate during the pandemic. Because of everything going on in the world and in my personal life, it is difficult to focus on school assignments. On a brighter note, I am extremely grateful to have such flexible and understanding professors who have either dismissed assignments or modified them in a way that would be easier on us as students.

As a Legal Assistant at a personal injury law office, I recently became unemployed and learned that my manager has been lying to me. Long story short, I sought office duties that I could do from home, but I was then told that there was absolutely nothing for me to do. I was in touch with my colleagues and from conversations with them, I realized that my manager assigned them various tasks to work from home. Before the pandemic, I was always punctual, provided excellent customer service to clients, and completed work for 10+ personal injury cases in a timely manner. Thus, I felt betrayed, considering how much hard work and effort I had constantly put into the office and how much I needed money to continue helping my parents. What a blessing it was for me to receive a stipend from San Jose State University as well as money from my unemployment claim and the stimulus bill! I truly believe that it was a blessing in disguise and I am super thankful for still being able to help my parents with the money I received.

2. What is one of the hardest things about the current situation? How have you coped?

One of the hardest things about the current situation is the uncertainty of income. Over the entire month of not hearing from my manager about any office duties, I was anxious about how I would earn income to continue helping my parents with bills. Although my parents, two essential workers, risked their own health for work at two manufacturing companies, I was worried about how we would be able to pay for food, rent, car payments, auto insurance, and other utility bills along the way.

Despite everything going on financially, I have been coping with it by being closer to God and trusting that He has a plan for me. Because of that, I have been able to see many unexpected

blessings coming my way, including various payments from the government and a large stipend from my school. Although there are ongoing issues at my workplace, I feel protected and reassured that there are better opportunities awaiting as soon as I let go of the current toxicity.

3. How has your relationship with your parents changed? How is the way you view your parents?

It is easier to discuss the negative aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, if there was one thing that changed for the better would definitely be my relationship with my parents. In the middle of March, while the coronavirus outbreak was worsening, I also lost my grandfather to a sudden stroke. His death during the pandemic brought my family together, as we have been having 15-minute prayers followed by random talks every day. Some days, our family has casual conversations about what we've done throughout the day. Other times, we have deep conversations reminiscing about the past family events and gatherings when my grandfather was still alive. Seeing all of us bond and laugh together after a long day of work and other responsibilities, I have started to look at my parents under a different, more positive light. I've learned that no matter what happens, we all are still family at the end of the day.

Despite everything going on in the world, my parents still go to work so that we can still afford bills and delicious meals on the dinner table. I used to be busy with my school work, a part-time job, and an internship that I neglected precious time I could have spent with my parents. Moreover, I bottled up and brought home all my stress and worries, resulting in me acting out and developing ugly anger issues when it came to talking with them. The pandemic and even my grandfather's death taught me how precious it is to be able to greet my parents and help them in ways that they cannot help themselves. One of the current responsibilities is helping my parents with paperwork translation related to my grandfather's funeral services and other applications to get governmental financial assistance.

4. How have you seen beauty in the hardships? Or one thing you're grateful for?

Everything happens for a reason and there is always something good behind every daily struggle. Because of the pandemic, I learned that I do not need to neglect God and family just to overwork myself for money. As long as my time is well spent with my family and my faith in God grows, then that is already enough and everything else will fall into its place when God thinks it is the right time. I thought that I would never be able to change my spending habits, especially on drinks and snacks; however, this pandemic forced me to stay home more and to not impulsively purchase food and drinks. Instead, I stepped out of my comfort zone to cook new, easy recipes while enjoying other dishes that my mother made as well. And just like that, each homemade meal just tastes better and better every single day. I thought that I would never be able to work and study at home; however, this pandemic showed me how blessed I am to have a roof over my head, doing my work while sipping on a cup of hot tea at 9:00AM instead of rushing to campus

to get parking. In some ways, this crisis is a blessing in disguise and I am grateful to be able to learn more about my life and my purposes and how happiness lies right in God and family.

5. How has this situation affected your feelings toward or relationship with this country and city?

This situation allowed me to realize that we all are here for each other, especially during times of crisis and uncertainty. I have also developed a greater appreciation for taxes because without taxes, there would not be a variety of financial assistance for U.S. residents and citizens. At the City level, I learned the importance of getting involved and having our voices heard by city councilmembers and other elected representatives. Thanks to the City representatives and residents, the situation does feel a little under control and more manageable. Despite going through a period of uncertainty with unemployment and financial hardships, I can at least put my trust and faith into the City's Councilmembers, who protect us and fight for our rights everyday. Because of the eviction moratorium, rent freeze, and paid sick leave for essential workers, my family and other San Jose residents can be a little less anxious if we are unable to earn income and make payments.