

Sitting in my 6th grade history class at 12 years old I was introduced to the definition of a pandemic, specifically through the example of The Bubonic Plague that struck Europe, Africa, and Asia around the mid 1300's. At that time, I understood the explanations as to why the "Black Death" was such a terrifying and catastrophic event to strike humanity. Insufficient medication, ignorance in understanding virology and disease vectors, and most importantly the pure panic and savagery that arose in individuals, propelled this pandemic forward to destroy millions of lives. Of course, I believed that it would be preposterous to imagine this type of disaster-a pandemic-could ever assault my life in this modern age. Humanity has improved in such incredulous ways via medication and technology, it would be difficult to envision a virus could wipe out thousands of lives in our time. Even though I have held these thoughts throughout the years, they were easily proven false when the 2019 Corona Virus Pandemic attacked our world.

What is in store for the future?

Initially, I was informed of the Corona Virus when it began to plague China. I even attended an informational discussion about the virus; specifically, what it was, how it was spreading, and if it would reach the United States. I was extremely confident in our ability to provide health care and our advanced medications that have developed over the years, so I told myself that even if the virus spread to our country, we would be safe. I assumed that even if you contracted the virus, treatment could be provided immediately, and we could stop the spread. This naivety combined with my lack of experience of living during a pandemic is why I was extremely surprised to see the events that occurred not even a month later.

Living during a pandemic



Before I could even process what was truly infecting our world, the Corona Virus struck the United States and began to spread faster than anyone could have imagined. While I am positive that this pandemic has not had the same results as The Bubonic Plague did in the past, the immediate interruption of my daily life was unexpected and scared me. What affected my family the most was the drastic impacts on our society, especially small businesses, due to the virus. While the Black Death destroyed towns, the Corona Virus destroyed jobs, businesses, and depressed the economy greatly, in addition to taking lives. Personally, my life was greatly affected due to my family's small business, a used-car dealership, having to close during the crisis. Both my mother and father run the business with their partners, so there is no other income into our household than what is made from the business. Therefore, the shutting down of car sales resulted in a large amount of stress and worry as to what was going to happen. While COVID-19 did not enter our household, its repercussions affected our daily life. My parents had to do everything they could to make money from mechanical work, which was considered a necessity and was not shut down; however, they were unable to really sell cars and struggled to attempt remote sales.

In addition to the increased stress over sales, my parents also had to determine a method as to which days they would work and which days their partners would work, in order to avoid interactions. My parents would have to go into work every other day to supervise the mechanics' jobs, while trying to find ways to continue sales remotely until they were authorized to sell again in person. At this point, it was unknown whether life would go back to normal ever again.

As for me, I felt terrible for the anxiety this pandemic created for our lives. Getting through remote schooling for the end of the semester was tricky enough, but combined with the family stress, my time during the pandemic was not a comfortable one. It was heartbreaking to hear news of the virus spreading more and more, which lengthened our quarantine and increased our worry for the business's success. I would hear my parents discussing various options for selling cars and also how they would go about replenishing their inventory when the time came. In addition to the business, some daily tasks were interrupted. Minute tasks such as ordering food for takeout, became incredibly difficult to complete. It may seem unimportant, but little rituals such as ordering from your favorite restaurant can help a bad day turn into a pleasurable one. There were rules you had to abide by, such as using a credit card as payment and grabbing the food off of your porch instead of from someone's hands. In addition, many restaurants had to shorten their menu options to cooperate with the small number of staff they now had. This meant that simply ordering my favorite meal is now a difficult ordeal instead of being a simple and convenient task, and most of the food I order may not currently be on the menu.



Hope for the future

The picture above was taken from the front door of my parent's business, signifying that selling cars would be possible by practicing social distancing and wearing a mask at all times. As soon as my parents were able to make these accommodations, the future suddenly seemed much brighter. I was able to help them get back on track, and currently business is booming once again. Little things like this is what gives me and my family hope for getting through such a difficult time. Being able to fight during a time like this helped my family become stronger together and also taught us to understand how important it is to remain hopeful. I believe that the Corona Virus pandemic catalyzed a change in myself, making me think more about the positive during stressful and devastating times rather than the negative. It increased my optimistic way of thinking through little victories such as finding a way to perform remote sales.

As the business began to run smoothly again, it gave me more confidence in finding ways to keep myself busy on top of helping my family. I was positive that since everything would be okay for my parents, that I could find opportunities for myself. Recently I was able to join an online seminar course for pre-medical students that has been very enlightening for my future

goals and keeps my mind active. Especially during a time like this, people need something to keep them active and happy. I am glad that I have found that for me, and I am confident that others can find the same thing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced many lives in different ways. It has devastated families as well as interrupting the mundane everyday tasks that help retain people's happiness. Like the Bubonic Plague in the 1300's, any pandemic has the strength to change lives within seconds, may it be by almost completely annihilating an entire country due to insufficient health care, or damaging lives economically, emotionally, and physically. The most important thing to remember is to remain positive and find what helps you work through this tough time. Everyone is working together to stay safe, stay happy, and stay optimistic.