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Covid-19 Narrative

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Narrative

I first heard about COVID on November 2019 when I was in Senegal. Senegal is a country in West Africa, I grew up there. Senegal has nothing to do with America. The foods are different, the streets, the people... In January 2020, I came in United States for college. I started to go to campus, and everything was going at the normal! I even forgot about the virus because at first, I was not taking it seriously. I then started to work at McDonald's in February. I didn't enjoy working there at the beginning because it was always busy, maybe it was because I was not used to it yet. It was also hard for me do get adapted to work because I was that kind of girl that is always protected by her mom, the youngest of the family so the favorite one. She would just let me do whatever I want at home, she wouldn't even assigned me any cores!

In March 2020, the virus started spreading all over the world. My boss called me and told me not to come anymore until the pandemic stopped but what he didn't know, and we all didn't know was when the pandemic was really going to stop and was it even going to end. I was not really affected about being unemployed because I didn't need money at that time. After that, followed the courses that we finally did online. There were no more face-to-face classes. I told myself that it would be good, that it would be easy, and I would have time for myself, but I was largely wrong. Of course, I had a lot of free time, but it was not interesting to stay locked in the house when I had just arrived in the country and I had a lot of things to do, to discover.

During this pandemic, I had a lot of alone time. It felt remoteness. The lack of conversation, the silence, the fact of feeling that no one was around me was terrible. I even went to buy a TV to camouflage the silence around me and not to feel the fear of not being surrounded, especially in a new country, without me knowing anyone. The only way to talk to people was virtual via WhatsApp or facetime. The most challenging moment was not talking to anyone about how my days were going, how I was feeling emotionally or physically. I am a person who does not confide in people quickly, so having nobody to talk to was just the last straw to be even more withdrawn.

Before all of this, I was a person who loved to sleep early and to wake up in good shape. I slept at 6am then woke up at 9am to take a one-and-a-half-hour online class and fell asleep until 5 p.m. Then I showered, ate, and did my homework to finally watch movies until 6am again. It was my lockdown routine which did not have a good effect on me at all since it had disturbed my usual hours. Wash your hands, distance yourself, wear masks... so many rules that covid has "established", rules that normally should be present in our lives. I couldn't stand masks at first. Being an asthmatic, it was difficult for me to stay long with masks. People looked at me strangely when I took off my mask for a minute to get some fresh air, but they couldn't really understand. They were staring and I was even feeling embarrassed.

By the end of May 2020, I finished my classes and my boss called me to come back to work. So, I agreed to go back and got back to work since at one point I was tired of staying home doing nothing. I was excited about this idea because I was so bored at home! Returning to work was very difficult. I expected it with the routine I had! I messed up the first orders I took, and the boss laughed when I explained to him how I was going through the lockdown. Everything had changed in McDonald's, there were only take-outs and drive thru. I thought it was going to be slow, but I was wrong because it had never been so busy. People would come and order lot of food and others would just order online from UberEATS or Door dash. There were many rules that they established such as wearing gloves which I find perfectly normal even if it was not because of the pandemic, putting hand sanitizers whenever we come back from outside after giving the food to the park cars, also using a napkin to open the door.

I heard about the vaccines for months and didn't want to do it. I was afraid because I heard people saying that it was even more dangerous than the virus and that people that took it had secondary effects and others died after taking it. My parents did the two doses and finally, I decided to take it a few weeks ago and I am waiting to have my second dose in about a week. I just had fever hours after I took it, and my arm was also hurting. Personally, this is the first pandemic that has changed my life habits and that I have assisted. Having been so lonely scared me and made me nervous at times. Lucky for me that the phone exists, and it at least allowed me to feel my mother's affection, reassuring me that everything would be fine. I am wondering if everything will be back to our old world, the one that we were all used to, our normal world.