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Reflective Essay

The year 2020 has been anything but uneventful. This year the whole world changed. I have gone through numerous negative and positive thoughts about what everyone in Utah is going through. It has been both a devastating experience and a learning process. The fact that the future is still so unknown is nerve-racking. Changing from an in-school class environment to online has been extremely irritating. I have had to take advice from my Literacy of Happiness class when dealing with those changes. Throughout this paper, I will review my insights on the changes and challenges of the past few months.

When The Literacy of Happiness first started, I hoped it would be a class to think about my life and how I can think about things in more positive ways. I soon learned the lessons we would take notes on could be transferred to everyday life when it comes to either school or my life outside of school. The most memorable lessons were those about cognitive distortions. The Fallacy of Change, in particular, stood out to me when I thought about old relationships and current. I have thought about it often and have been much better in my thought process when it comes to thinking about changes I want people to make. Having this in the back of my mind has helped me immensely when I choose the words that come out of my mouth.

Online learning has been somewhat challenging because now I have to attend classes while I am at home, which at first did not go well for me. When anyone is at home, chances are it is easier to get distracted by activities in the household, such as the television, especially if the person lacks focus. That is me, even though I know what time my classes are scheduled, I find it hard to get out of bed to attend the course. With the COVID-19 pandemic still looming, it is even harder for me to concentrate because I cannot leave the home environment to go to a quiet place like the neighborhood library. I believe this challenge came about because I was used to attending my classes in a physical room; that is why trying to adjust to an online setting is a struggle for me. The other challenge I experience while studying online is getting accustomed to the online interface, such as the website we are using to learn. Technical issues like the internet we use at home, and power outage during a class session is also a challenge since I miss out on some of the important notes. Being autonomous, I have to work on self-motivation so that I can attend my classes with a positive aspect as it is the least I can do. I have come to accept the circumstances that have led to us attending the online lectures. The biggest challenge academically is probably working on assignments from home. However, I was able to find a solution for this and decided to set time aside and dedicate myself to working on the assignment. Afterward, I get to engage in activities that are not academically related, like catching up with the latest movie to relax.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I was a student pursuing my degree, and I had already had my life somehow figure out during this year. For instance, where I would intern during my summer break and where I would be staying after we re-open school in fall since I will have already moved out of home to learn about independence and being self-reliable. My family during that time was also going on a crisis of its own with both parents out work, and my siblings

and I were at home all at once, which somehow took a toll on my parents. The pressure of trying to provide for us since my father was the only one who kept his job as they could work from home took a toll on my parents as well. I was able to help my mother with household chores when I was not studying to keep her from going insane due to the chaos and mess. The hardest part of this time was the uncertainty, how will the future look like after this? Will the world be the same again? Are we ever going to recover from this pandemic wholly? Even though I somehow knew some of the answers to these questions, I could not help but think about them. I tried to accept that the world will never be the same again because of the adverse effects despite how hard it was for me to accept. The gift of this pandemic is that we were all together, and we supported each other physically and mentally despite cash flow issues. The other gift was hanging out with my siblings and getting to understand them better on a personal level fully.

I have changed entirely because now I do not have to think about myself and my problems; instead I have been able to focus on other people's issues as well, especially at home. Instead of burying myself with social media apps like Instagram, I have been more open-minded. I have let people in by interacting with my siblings and making memories with them by doing activities together, such as baking or taking walks outside the house, though not too far. I have also been able to check on my friends as well, see how they are doing during this time, and offer a helping hand when they need my assistance mainly due to anxiety and uncertainty. The pandemic has made me realize that there is more to life than just focusing on the negative impacts like the number of deaths or the number of infected patients. Instead, it has made me be more appreciative and not to take any moment for granted since it might not be there tomorrow. It has made me focus on the now and not tomorrow. What I have learned about myself during this time is that I can be strong emotionally when circumstances force me to. I can train my mind

to think positively, I can adapt to change, and I have come to value essential aspects of relationships with family and friends as well. In that, when this crisis came to be, we were all frightened, and our emotions were all over the place due to fear of being infected, at this time, some do not do well under such circumstances. I have come to realize that being emotionally stable has made me stay sane by controlling my anxiety and fears. When we started online learning, I was not motivated to attend classes, but since it takes 21 days to form or break a habit; I have decided to embrace the latter. I have developed a practice of training my mind to think positively about attending the classes. Adapting to change could not be possible without training my mind into thinking positively because change is the hardest thing every person has to go through, but I have been able to learn how to manage and accept change. Lastly, I have realized that I have come to value the time I spend with those close to me like my family and catching up with my friends virtually. Before the pandemic, I was never really keen on this matter, but I am glad I do now.

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