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Making this Moment in Time: My New COVID-19 Reality

By: Faleisha Escort

How has the isolation and the virus changed your life, affected your sense of your identity and your place in the universe?

-The isolation and the virus has definitely changed my life. I am no longer able to go to the Bronx Community College campus and enjoy my classes and campus life. I now find myself as a distant learner along with my other college peers. Also, I was working as an essential worker (Home Health Care Professional) and had to stop in order to double up as a teacher for my son here at home as he has been transitioned to remote learning. I have always been an outgoing person who loved to get out the house and do things. My outgoing spirit is still there but now it is more cautious, and I make sure to stay close to home as well as order items needed online whenever possible. I also don't go out as much as I used to. I find myself home more than anything due to this virus. I feel like my world got much smaller. I never took the train much pre-covid 19, if I could help it. But now I don't take the train at all and haven't took the train in months since this outbreak. And I have no concerns about taking it anytime soon. As for my place in the universe, I feel a strong sense of spirituality and a need to hold on to what is really important, my loved ones, and making sure they are safe.

How have you been empowered?-I've been empowered through the time I have now to self-reflect on life and what is really important. I've been empowered to strengthen my goals and improve my home environment since this is where I now spend most of my time with my family. I feel more empowered than ever to complete and receive my degree in Therapeutic Recreation despite the multiple challenges. My determination has only increased, and I am determined to make it through this challenging semester. I want to be able to look back and tell my story about how I made it through. Completing this semester as a distant learner also empowered me to continue distant learning in the future because I know now that I can do it.

What challenges have you had to overcome?-I've had to overcome several challenges to overcome such as: being a distant learner and trying to work part-time while doubling up as an at home teacher, and maintaining a home as well as various services and aspects of my life. So that means I had to overcome the challenge of just being during this time of crisis. I had to overcome being: a distant learner, a worker, a mother who has now turned into a home school teacher, a significant other, a friend, a loved one, a supervisor of any community based services for my son, etc. And in the end, something in my life had to be sacrificed in order to not become overwhelmed with the challenges of my other duties and responsibilities. And that sacrifice was working. I had to put my work status on hold in order to take care of the other multitude of priorities at home that immediately takes precedence now.

How has it created a sense of unity?-It has created a sense of unity because each day I know and remind myself that I am not alone. Each day I talk to friends and loved ones or watch TV

and/or other sources of media to remind myself that I am not alone in this pandemic. And even though both myself and my child are now distant/remote learners I feel unified with both Bronx Community College and my son's school who have been very patient and understanding during this trying time. I feel a sense of unification regarding this time in history that I am living with everyone during this pandemic.

Define who is essential?-To me, anyone who is continuing to strive to do their best each day is essential. Whether you are working or not working during this time of crisis you are essential as long as you are doing the best you can. When I was working during the pandemic, I saw myself as essential because I was a home-based frontline worker. But now I see myself as more essential than ever because I have to take up the role of a stay at home mother and home schooler on behalf of my special needs child who must do remote learning now. I am also essential because I am at home continuing my education while staying safe and keeping others safe. So, I believe that any parents that are doing the same or for anyone who is caring for a loved one or working from home as well as frontline workers who are in the public helping and/or saving others are essential. And we must continue to regard ourselves as essential because we are all in this challenging and historic pandemic together.

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