

Date Submitted: 5/25/2020

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How has COVID-19 affected you?

I don’t know when I last held my grandchildren, whether it was January or February. I don’t even really know when it all started. We started social distancing a little before everyone else. And then, when it was my birthday, they surprised me by doing a lawn party and singing happy birthday, but it was windy and crazy and they all froze to death and some of the balloons flew away. I believe if it doesn’t have balloons then it’s not fun. Whether they unfortunately got liberated, I still enjoyed the balloons.

How would you say, it has affected your day to day?

Well, I am supported by frontline workers. So, there have been times when we have been short staffed, due to, and I mean it’s terrifying for everyone concerned clients and attendants et cetera. But, when I go out and walk my dog, it’s eerily quiet. It’s like one might imagine it might have been after the apocalypse or something. I wasn’t a big fan of apocalypse stories or anything, it’s just that it’s kind of eerie, that it seems like where did all the cars and people go? And it’s not just, and actually, I was blessed, I grew up on crown land and I truly love to be away from people, however, it doesn’t work very well with my current lifestyle, because needing transit, that’s accessible and stuff. I haven’t been using transit period. Although, I have to say that I think the busses are cleaner than they’ve ever been. They weren’t getting cleaned all that often before.

I’m blessed with an irreverent sense of humour, and sometimes dark humour, whatever it’s called. I think we all need big belly laughs as many

times a day as we can get them. And, because we need to keep our immunity up. And that's why I think the health department should be telling people go out for a walk every day. Get fresh air and check out the nature that's still there. And because so many people are staying in their apartment or condo or whatever, and I think it's very bad for their mental health; I'm not a psychiatrist or anything, but I'm pretty sure.

I'm blessed, I supplement Vitamin D for my MS and I've had PhD's teach me nutrition, so I've been very fortunate because nutrients improved my body. I couldn't use my glasses properly, I couldn't read properly, I mean I read but, I couldn't use my eyes together. I overused one of my eyes. But, because I took nutrition for MS, I made my eye muscles, I had a lazy eye, I didn't even know about it. So suddenly, I had binocular vision and I was like oh my god! I can see!

What would you say has been your biggest challenge during this time?

Staying positive. Sometimes some people would come in and they were having a bad day and they were negative and you were trying to drag them up with you. I call myself a pragmatic optimist. But there's no question that this has been very difficult for frontline workers. And I, haven't been anywhere near a hospital. I'm very grateful, I used to work in a hospital. I'm very grateful that I do not work at a hospital currently and I have not been anywhere near a hospital. Actually, one of the weird things that happened is because I got my laptop through Baycrest, I'm supposed to have support, when I have a problem with it, technical issue, but of course, we are not non-urgent, so we have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. So, my support is zero. So, that's kind of bizarre, I would have appreciated if I could have called Steve, my technician and said 'hey, yada yada yada, I forget how to use dragon whatever', actually, I'm going to go on YouTube to try and find how to use Dragon, the software that I have on my computer.

I have practiced Yoga, since I was knee high to a grasshopper, but it might be kind of relaxing to do something, someone else' spiel, because perhaps I'm too locked into what I do and I don't even realize it. I'm very very blessed, I had a great many cassettes and I hypnotized myself to be positive. It literally took away a lot of negativity that I grew up with. I kind of thought that it would have worked a lot better if I could do it in my own voice, but I used to go to sleep with cassettes on and it's been helpful.

Have you been able to communicate with family?

My siblings and extended family, yes. I am online and a lot of my cousins and friends of cousins are on messenger. It's funny how if you have 49 first cousins on your mother's side, you have a whole lot of cousins when they have grandchildren. And that was just on my mom's side. I have 17 to 20 on my dad's side. Well, back in the day, they didn't have very much choice. My aunt's used to say if you had an extra beer, the next day, bam! Kids. I spoke to my grandchildren on the phone.

Have you been watching any movies or TV at all?

I watched a lot of TV on demand. Trying to avoid accidental updates, I don't find them helpful, if you are already doing everything that you can. Finding out how many people in your community is not helpful for most of us. I think that if it's out of your control, then, you should leave it alone.