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“COVID 19 has taught me to appreciate the small moments in life. The spontaneity of unplanned conversation, the joy of eating take out with friends, hugging a loved one, the connective energy of a crowd. Value them.”

“Life comes at you fast. The normalcy of routine is a contradicting force of perspective. On the one hand the stress of daily life can at times feel inescapable; a proverbial balancing act of expectation, sustenance and achievement and relief. On the other, we long for the return of normalcy in the handful of moments in a lifetime where our daily lives are interrupted like a jolt to the senses. There are even fewer moments in life where this occurs collectively.

COVID 19 hit as I was finishing up my second year of law school. The general stress of exams, gave way to a new, wider sense of anxiety of what life would be like in the immediate future. What were once innocuous events, like attending class, hanging out with friends, and going out to eat could be potentially life threatening. The daily grind would now be online. Physical contact limited to your immediate residence.

Nearly two months in I can reflect and say COVID-19 is an experience that has forced all of us to reflect on the value of human interaction. There is a sense of poetic irony that in the interests of collective well being we adapted to a world where contact is no longer permitted. It has not been an easy experience. Fear, anger, and frustration inevitably lead to lapses in judgement, arguments and resentment. Any sign of symptoms are treated with suspicion. Family networks are fractured. Once mundane tasks such as grocery shopping require meticulous planning. Social meetings are restricted to video apps. Face masks like the N95, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are a necessary outerwear. This is the new normal.

We long for the innocent past, but in a way I am grateful in a lot of senses for the experience. COVID 19 has taught me to appreciate the small moments in life. The spontaneity of unplanned conversation, the joy of eating take out with friends, hugging a loved one, the connective energy of a crowd. Value them.

The pandemic has highlighted who the truly essential workers in society. To all the growers, harvesters, drivers, grocery clerks, manufacturers, administrative support, public transit operators, technicians, paramedics, nurses, doctors and any that I may have missed thank you, from the bottom of my heart. For future readers please value their presence by ensuring livable wages and work conditions. For the rest of us it has pushed technological integration into overdrive, forcing us to rethink the traditional workplace much sooner than otherwise. Work is not only a physical space, but a state of mind.

In a global world, there is no longer a realistic sense of isolation. Equipment, coordination, monitoring, public policy and strategy are all invaluable for prevention, without any of it we are lost. The pandemic I believe is a lesson for all humanity. This will happen again. Be vigilant. Demand accountability from those in power to be prepared, respect the natural world, ensure public health agencies are well funded and listen to the advice of health professionals. We're all in this together."