

The lessons I learned during COVID-19

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How are you all doing with the COVID-19 pandemic?

We all experienced that many things were cancelled. Graduation and entrance ceremonies were cancelled. Summer vacation was shortened. It is difficult to hunt for a job because the economy had deteriorated.

In addition, there is a lot of stress with the daily reports of how many people are infected with COVID-19. We had to isolate ourselves and couldn't interact because of this pandemic.

And now at this moment, people from all walks of life are dying.

I graduated high school this last March, and I was looking forward to starting my university life. I would have to learn how to live on my own as an adult.

I had to say goodbye to my parents and make a new college life in Okinawa. At that time I guessed COVID-19 would be the same as the yearly flu. But now I see this prediction was too optimistic.

COVID-19 was much more serious than I had predicted. I had just moved to Okinawa and now my University was going to be held online.

I was barely managing my situation. I didn't have any friend or relatives on the island. So I felt like that time was a dark tunnel of loneliness that would be last forever. I wanted to improve my situation.

Okinawa prefecture was in an alerted state of emergency. I couldn't go outside and I couldn't go home. I felt trapped.

My parents contacted me since I was living by myself. I felt so sad. I was so depressed. Then I become worried. Perhaps, tomorrow I could be

infected with COVID-19. What if my parents were infected?
I felt so scared and insecure. I felt panicked.

However, I couldn't handle having this much stress, so I came up with a thought in my head. How can I have a clear mind and be able to survive through this stressful time?

The word is gratitude. Gratitude means to be thankful for everything. If I didn't have this stressful quarantine experience, I wouldn't be able to reflect on how happy I was before this pandemic.

I can't imagine how the world will be in the future, but I'm alive now. I can sleep at night, get up in the morning, I can take classes and study. More importantly I have friends that are in the same situation.

I can breathe now and I can think about my life. At this moment, I have the ability that I can change despair to hope. That is a powerful lesson that I can use throughout my life.

I wanted to share my message with others. I hope that you gained strength during the pandemic.

I won't forget my feelings the day I started face-to-face classes and I had the chance to meet my classmates.

Even now I feel a lot of gratitude standing here and speaking my mind and having an audience.

I also learned something else during this pandemic. It is a dream that I can encourage other people.

I have confidence because I have overcome difficulties in my life by myself. I feel proud of all that I have accomplished.

Think about how you have become stronger during this pandemic.
What are you grateful for?