

April 1st, 2020

Today is April 1st, 2020. I sit in my NYC living room where it feels like I've been sitting for the past month. It is weird and it is strange and yes, I know those are synonyms but what words can you say other than weird.

I regret not starting this assignment a few weeks ago as I love journaling and feel my perspective on March 1st as opposed to March 15 to now would be different. Had I been in the right mindset to journal, things I would've liked to write about include:

- Moving out of my freshman dorm room on March 13th as opposed to the expected May 9th
- My friend who had been studying abroad in Italy being forced to go into government quarantine
- Adapting to life online: Zoom classes, weekly facetimes with online games (Scriblio and Quiplash), more phone calls with grand-parents, a lot of Instagram livestreams, and TikTok
- Realizing how good college is only after I returned home
- The books, tv shows, and movies I've experienced thus far
 - The Circle on Netflix, Love is Blind on Netflix
 - Deep Water by Patricia Highsmith
 - The animated Mulan on DisneyPlus
- The new board game my family and I have been playing: Ticket to Ride

Alas, I cannot change the past. If I would, I would've prevented the spread of the coronavirus. It is so odd how one virus can completely change the world as we know it. No more being on campus, no more going to work, no more hanging out with friends.

Coming from New York City, I feel especially weird. For the city that never sleeps, it sure is taking an awfully long nap.

Before I was born, there was a point my parents considered moving to the suburbs. However, my mom decided against it saying she did not want to be the person who lived inside her house. And, so, we were never house people. A rainy day was not the perfect chance to stay indoors. Instead, we'd see a movie, go to a museum. We spent more time outside than in. Our 1000 square feet apartment never felt small because we were rarely in it. Yet now, NYC and perhaps the entire world has become the suburbs. Stuck at home with nothing to do except complain and daydream.

What was life like before? Was there a time we went out to dinner, the beach? Saw our friends? It feels like a distant memory. A weird thought occurred to me this morning that once this corona period is over, a statement that currently seems unimaginable, it will indeed be the Roaring 20s, circa 2020. Indeed the world changes every minute but somehow, I know the minutes following self-quarantine will be more different than before. Everything will be referred to as pre-corona or pre-2020. My world changed when I got into Georgetown but the world changed at some point in March 2020 when things inevitably went downhill.

I love New York and I continue to love New York even as I can't see the wonderful people within. Since Sunday, 7:00 pm brings about cheers and applause for all the essential workers and it is wonderful. In a press conference a few days ago, a beaten-down, tired Governor

Andrew Cuomo said something that New Yorkers have been hearing since 9/11. "We are New York tough. We are tough. You have to be tough. This place makes you tough, but it makes you tough in a good [way](#)." We never wanted to be the epicenter of a pandemic but we cheer at 7:00 and we, well most of us, social distance. I think New York can make it, in fact, in the back of my head, I know New York and the rest of the world will make it. But right now, I'm searching for some hope.

There are so many more things I can say. But I am just an eighteen-year-old who has been on a process of self-discovery which this virus has only heightened.

Today, I listened to the song Red by Taylor Swift. I watched two episodes of Suite Life on Deck on Disney Plus. I watched Jeopardy and lost to my mom. I took a French quiz, I took a math test. I played Uno and won. I read a few pages of Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance and I wrote this journal entry. Tomorrow looks similar and while it is not the most exciting prospect, I look forward to being able to sit down at my desk, with my cat at my side, and write another entry.

Here's to New York Tough,

Haley

April 8th, 2020

If there was no coronavirus, today would have been the day I would be arriving home for Easter break. My roommate (who lives in Philly) and I were set to take the train together and I was looking forward to eating sushi with my family as that is something I have yet to find good in D.C. But, evidently, I've been home for almost a month now. I haven't seen my roommate in over a month and I haven't had sushi in way too long. We haven't ordered any sushi since we don't trust the quality of raw fish at the moment. While generally I would appreciate three days

off, during this quarantine I want my school days back. I want to go to class, I want to talk to my classmates and teachers, I want to have something to do. Even when I do have class, my days still kind of feel like days off. I am done with class by 2:30 everyday, I get to watch more tv, I get to sleep later, and I always wear comfy clothes. I don't think my day off tomorrow, Friday, or Monday will be much different. I wrote a schedule tonight of things I'd like to get done tomorrow but, we'll see if that actually happens.

While I still have motivation to do my homework and study, something I found funny was that I lack any motivation to unpack my stuff from college. Everything still remains sprawled in boxes and trash bags across my room. I guess part of the problem is I don't know where to put it, after all, I am still in an apartment. And, psychologically, I'd have to say that by not unpacking and fully resettling into my room, I am not accepting that my freshman year experience is over. Ideally, I'd like to get a huge additional room and throw anything that belongs in a dorm room in there. But, my family's one-bedroom apartment definitely does not support that lifestyle.

In my continued effort to be more positive, here are a few good things which happened today. I got into a six credit sociology class I wanted, the last episode of Modern Family aired tonight, marking the end of a beautiful show that has been with my family since I was in elementary school, and I made milkshakes.

Today, I started to master a Taylor Swift song on guitar which I've been practicing for a few days. Today, I won Jeopardy. Today, I submitted a science paper which was driving me crazy. Today, I get to go to sleep ready for another day.

To finding the pros, Haley

April 13th, 2020

Today was my last day off until finals week which begins very soon...too soon. I'm not sure if I'm in the right mental state to study for finals and write a ten page paper. This is the first time I'll say this but I'd rather be in Lau than my bedroom. Crazy, I know. The weird thing is, I kind of liked finals time. I was able to work with no distractions and everyone around me was all committed to the same goals. I liked leaving Lau at 12am and acknowledging those around me still struggling, yet, still working. I've never felt the "we're all in this together" mentality until finals week and that is just another thing quarantine has taken away from me.

Another great thing about finals week is knowing that in a few weeks time, I could be home. I could see my high school and middle school friends who I missed dearly. I could see my family, my pets, my beloved home and hometown. No matter what grade I received on my paper or my tests, I knew I would be taking a train home very soon. Of course, now I am home and many of the things which motivated me this past December no longer remain. Once I finish my papers, I am still home. And, I can't celebrate by going out to a restaurant, seeing my friends, or even a movie. And, it's much harder to commit myself to working when the world is in this drastic state of despair and nearly everything around me is at a pause. I will do my best. I am grateful that my grades in all my classes are pretty good and as long as I do decently on my finals, I should be at ease. Not to mention, most of my teachers have been incredibly fair, if not lenient, when it comes to assignments. This is good as it provides me less stress during this stressful time but also a little bit annoying for someone who strives on doing as many things as possible. There was in fact a point where I considered asking my French teacher for more work just so I could feel productive. But, I digress.

Yesterday, Boston University announced that they may not be sending students back to campus until January 2021. So, that's some not so good news. But, I am still remaining hopeful. The number of reported COVID cases seem to be decreasing, social distancing seems to be relatively in effect, and if science proves correct, I can't fathom why we should still be quarantining in August. If quarantine lasts past May, I have no idea what I'll do to pass the time.

This journal is already getting pretty long and school does not stop for quarantine. There's always more to talk about but I end with something I think is very appropriate for this assignment. For homework this past week in history, we were assigned with reading documents from the Thirty Years War. The last document of the book is titled *The Experience of War, Anxiety regarding the Future, and the Will to Reconstruct*. The document is written by an anonymous author who expresses concern from what occurs after war. Yes, the Thirty Years War cannot compare to the coronavirus. But, I found a few sentences which are still relevant. Here are a few:

- “They say the terrible war is over now. But it doesn't feel like peace anywhere”
 - Will there ever be a time after quarantine lifts that we go back to “normal”?
- “The others all say it's not really peace, the soldiers will surely come again, and there's no point in doing anything”
 - Will we ever feel safe going outside or will coronavirus forever hang above our heads? Will there be another wave?
- “We all must stand together now and get to work, inside and out”

- If I have taken one thing from this virus, especially being in NY, it's that we are a community. We must support our essential workers and everyone in between.

That is the only way the situation will get better.

Today, I played guitar before getting interrupted by a call from a friend (probably better anyways). I lost Jeopardy. I listened to Taylor Swift and Dancing Queen by Abba. I played a game called Ticket to Ride which I keep losing. Not for long. If I keep losing this game, somehow, I know life will be okay. My mom has been beating me at games for years.

To losing games and one day winning,

Haley

April 21st, 2020

Today was yet another productive day which means I do not have much to talk about. The one unique part of my life is that I am tutoring NYC public school students. A program called Edumates (which I wish I could say I started) began to provide NYC students free tutors and educational resources. Due to the pandemic, the need for tutors was greater than ever since so many children are without teachers and struggling to understand the content. I love tutoring. I tutored all throughout high school and had begun seeking tutoring positions at Georgetown right before the coronavirus hit. So, when I saw this opportunity, I knew it was something I wanted to do.

Last week, I was matched with my student and yesterday, we began our first tutoring session. I told the boy, named Devesh, I was available up to five hours a week and he could split those hours any way he liked. He decided one hour on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. He is an eighth grader from Queens and I can tell, more than anything, how much he misses school.

While I have thus far helped him with science and history homework, I know I cannot provide all that school does. I am not a teacher who deeply cares for Devesh's success and has watched him grow throughout the year. I am not Devesh's friend who makes him laugh. I am his last resort to learning and I can tell he knows that. Thankfully, his regents (exams required by New York State) were canceled so all his homework and studying is just for his teachers which means there is less stress involved. Regents determine if you graduate school, a pressure I'm not sure if I was willing to take on. That said, tutoring sessions have gone well so far. From what I can tell, he has minimal difficulty understanding the work. Rather, he has trouble focusing and collecting his thoughts. Often, I have to check in on him to ensure he is still working. Focusing is a major issue and many students who I have tutored in the past have experienced it as well. Yet, with Devesh, I have to work on his focus through facetime, not an easy task. If I was sitting there in person, I could tap on the desk or stare at him until he remembers the assignment. But him in his house, me in mine, it is so easy for Devesh to get distracted. I can't blame him. In my lectures, I often find myself doing things that would never be the case if I was actually in White Gravenor or Car Barn. Surely I can go on Instagram while understanding the chemical makeup of plastics... My goal is to help Devesh get to a point where he can complete assignments in twenty minutes rather than forty-five. The past two days he has forgotten to send me his assignments before our Facetime call so I'm hoping that will change.

Tutoring Devesh makes me think of all the other children who are suffering in this pandemic. Young children don't get to socialize, move around, all the things that are so essential when you are under the age of ten. I sympathize with the parents who have to deal with their energetic children and I feel for children who just want to see their friends. I Facetimed my 8

year old cousin the other day and she simply seemed sad. No 8 year old deserves to be sad and upset because they haven't had choice time in a month. Children are very malleable and I hope this pandemic doesn't shape them permanently.

Enough said. Happy things today: I feel confident for my two tests tomorrow. One is an oral exam with my french professor. I am crossing my fingers I have no issues with Zoom. The last instance I want to see "internet connection is unstable" is while my professor is asking me a question in a language I am already not great at understanding. Another happy thing is I am still feeling productive and excited to continue work. Every day I study, I am reminded there is not much more studying to go. Three, my mom began reading the book I recommended to her and is enjoying it! My mom was an English major and reads three books a week. If she likes a book, it is a good sign. The book, by the way, is Hillbilly Elegy.

Today, I played Wii games and won most of them. I lost Uno. I listened to Jessie's Girl by Rick Springfield. I watched Jeopardy and I was productive. Five more days of classes. 17 more days until all my finals are complete.

To the kids,

Haley

April 28th, 2020

I've made it, the countdown is over. My last class of the second semester of my freshman year concluded at approximately 3:50pm. While this is certainly not how I, or anyone, expected the second semester to end, it finally happened. I must say, despite being stuck inside, after spring break, the semester went by fairly quickly. Perhaps it is because the work was more spread out. Perhaps it is because classes provided a needed distraction from my otherwise

mundane lifestyle. In the end, all of us Georgetown students have nearly made it. We just have a few more finals and then we're fully done.

Since I've been filling out teacher evaluations, I've noticed how lucky I was this semester. I gave each of my professors glowing reviews for no other reason than that they deserved them. While their performance was stellar before COVID, I was even more grateful for how my professors responded afterwards. Each professor was overly willing to accommodate each student's needs and my professors and classes were one of the few things that did not provide me stress during this stressful time. In the beginning, I figured this was the case nationwide. Professors providing extensions, not worrying as much about absences (especially due to time differences). But, as I go on Facebook and talk to my friends at other universities, I realize good and nice professors cannot be found everywhere. Many professors have only amplified the workload and have been ignorant of students' grades becoming suddenly low. My friend at USC said students lose points if they do not come to class even if they are in an entirely different continent. Some professors simply post lecture recordings not even trying to stimulate a class discussion. Meanwhile, my experience included:

- Almost three additional weeks to complete papers
- Mandatory attendance for only one of my classes
- For my Problem of God class, a required class at Georgetown, since over half the students were international meaning they would have had to come to class at 2 or 3am, my professor decided to make class only once a week (instead of three) and still optional
- Most of my professors ensured our grades would not go down from what they were prior to virtual learning

- Evidently, my history professor even allowed us to complete our final on the coronavirus rather than the exciting, but not as timely, Holy Roman Empire
- All my professors cared about our health and lives before school. They saw where we were struggling and responded to our needs. They were kind and considerate and, when the time was ready, they were more than willing to teach us.

I am always grateful for my professors but the coronavirus has made me more grateful than ever. Thank you professors for reminding me why I chose Georgetown and reminding me of the good in people everywhere.

One last thing. Although my Problem of God classes are now optional, my professor asked that everyone try to attend the one today since it was our last. Since attendance has only been five kids the past weeks (me being one), I was wary of who would show up. Yet, 12 of the 18 students in our class arrived. One girl called in from 3am in the Philippines, another at 2am in Vietnam. In addition to the professors, I am grateful to the kind and passionate students who are willing to sacrifice a good sleep to come to a class and show their appreciation. I know people in high school who wouldn't even show up to school before 8:30am, despite classes starting at 8 and them living two blocks away. I am proud to know Georgetown students who value education and will show it in whatever way possible. Clearly, you can see, I am grateful for everything encompassing Georgetown and really really hope we return in August.

Today, I won two games of Ticket to Ride, and lost one. I listened to Ease my Mind by Ben Platt. I studied, I watched Jeopardy (we didn't keep track to see who won). No more class!!
10 more days until all my finals are complete.

To the wonderful university that is Georgetown, Haley