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Self-growth

Francesca D'Urzo

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SCU IN QUARANTINE

Our Pandemic Stories

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Self-Growth

Francesca D'Urzo '24
Student

The pandemic has definitely been one of the toughest but most self-reflective years of my life. I watched as my family's businesses had to shut down, as my older relatives feared for their lives, and as my income became non-existent right before I had to start paying for college. My already high anxiety sky-rocketed and waking up every morning became a monotonous chore. The hardest part to cope with was that all of these hardships occurred at the time of my life that was supposed to be the happiest and most memorable.

I would have never expected to experience my 18th and 19th birthdays, high school graduation, and freshman year of college all from my childhood bedroom.

But despite the brutal start of the pandemic, this time spent alone did shape me into a college student that I am extremely proud of. The year's hardships and quarantine left me no choice but to reflect on what kind of person I want to be, and as difficult as it was, I uncovered that girl: one who lacks a fear of judgment, focuses on her mental health, demonstrates dedication and perseverance, and uses these qualities to be a caring and supportive individual for others in their hard times.

Isolation has allowed me to rediscover the hobbies and interests that make me happy in my free time which has helped me stay positive throughout quarantine and my virtual freshman year. For example, writing helped me overcome and cope with a majority of the personal issues I combatted throughout the pandemic. Whenever my mind was consumed by anxious thoughts, I would open a blank document and type out everything my anxiety was telling me. I would then open a second document and write out everything I am grateful for to counteract the negative thoughts I was feeding myself.

By being able to put my anxious thoughts into words, it became easier to focus on the positive aspects of my life no matter how difficult the pandemic made it. The pandemic gave me the opportunity to focus on myself instead of how others perceive me because we physically could not interact with anyone.

As difficult as the pandemic was at times, I am grateful for the experience to be on my own and identify what makes me happy outside of other people. I feel that the pandemic has bonded a lot of SCU students in the sense that we are all more grateful for each other after a year of separation. Despite the initial hardships, I am extremely proud of the progress I have made as a person throughout the pandemic and I am looking forward to further improving throughout my years at Santa Clara University.

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