

# TODAY'S LEADERSHIP

Issues & Challenges  
Faced by the

## NEXT GENERATION of LEADERS

Edited by  
DR. ROBERT FOMER



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## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Hello everyone,  
Thank you for being part of the Youth with a Future 2020 summer program.

Whether you joined as an investor, mentor, or volunteer, I am grateful for all that you did for this program. We are thankful as well to the directors and supporters for believing in our cause and providing sufficient financial support to successfully complete another session of our summer program. Also, I would like to thank the parents and community well-wishers who supported us and prayed for us. In these testing times, your motivation and encouragement got us through the finish line.

More importantly, I appreciate all the students that participated in this year's program. You have performed tremendously this year, despite the challenges the current pandemic brought in our way. I hope that you managed to learn new things and were enlightened by the various mind-stimulating activities and thought-provoking lessons we taught you.

As always, we end this eventful session with our summer ebook. It is a collection of all our thoughts, opinions, and perspectives on the present and future. Each article will give you an insight into the challenges leaders face today. We have also dedicated a special section to show the world from the next generation's perspective.

However, before we move forward, let us reflect on what we can do to extend our support to the leaders of tomorrow.

The summer program might be over, but our students' journey has only begun. We are still unsure about attendance in school, the rules of distance learning, and offline lessons. There is a significant racial divide amongst the masses, and social distancing is still the norm. Physical and social gatherings and activities are still on hold. The psychological, social, physical, financial, and spiritual implications of these uncertain times are overwhelming and devastating.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to assist the next generation as they navigate these indefinite paths. I want to shed light on questions that have been haunting me ever since the pandemic began. Even though our summer workshop is over, I wish to mentor students.

### It is why I ask you three things:

- How do we support the next generation despite our limited reach?
- How do we continue to challenge our youngsters via online meetings?
- How do we help them understand their real purpose, shape their vision, and help them create SMART goals for the future?





More importantly, I wonder if lessons learned in the workshop and their inherent talents will get sidelined when they face failure. Would they forget how to stay focused and strong when they come across adversities? Will they lose faith in the God-given abilities when they fail?

I do not want them to lose themselves or go off-track when they try to achieve their goals in the future. Thus, I want to continue working with these youngsters and assist them in any way I can.

**I plan to do this by:**

Hiring a part-time person(s) to use social technology to encourage and challenge students. That way, they can focus on God’s purpose and never lose faith or hope in building a better life.

Creating online content (i.e. videos, tutorials, and blogs) to support and motivate the young audience

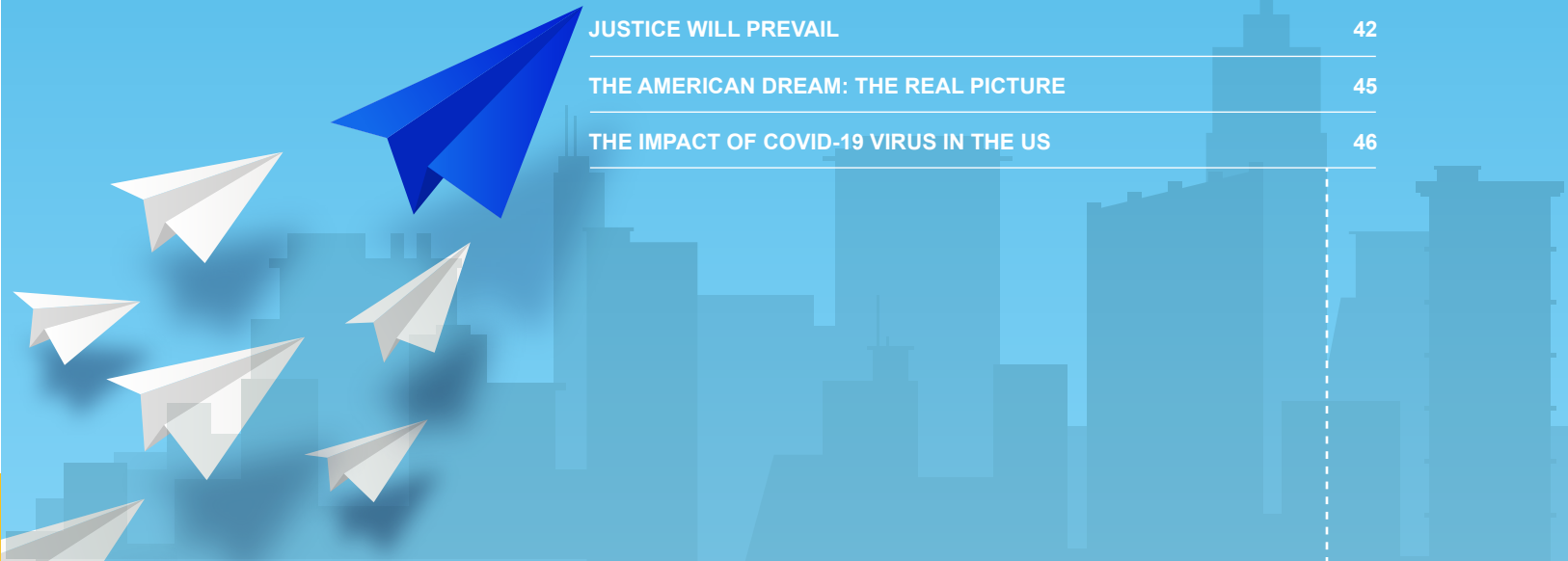
To look for interactive and innovative ways to keep them engaged.

Together, we can inspire the next generation of leaders to become intellects, creators, and strategic planners. So that they can build a better, brighter, and promising future.

**Dr. Robert Fomer**  
Director  
Transformational Leadership Forum/Youth With A Future

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# HATS OFF TO THE GRADUATES OF 2020

## Celebrating the Class of 2020: Message from the Grads

Youth with a Future (YWAF) is proud to present the class of 2020. We congratulate them on this achievement and commend them for their outstanding performances.

Our graduates have something to say. We hope that this message resonates with the youngsters treading on a similar path and those who are still at school. To the teachers who never got a chance to say goodbye to their beloved students and to the parents who didn't see their children receive diplomas on stage.



Around the world, we will remember this year as a series of unfortunate events. The global pandemic engulfs our planet and stops us from leading a normal life. Offices shift their businesses to remote working modes, while essential workers continue to carry on as if nothing has changed. These are devastating times for the whole community.

However, it has hit the class of 2020 on another level. They had to cut short their plans for the future and confine themselves within their homes. During this time, they missed many milestone moments, which included the upcoming graduation.

So what do graduates across the city have to say about this turn of events?

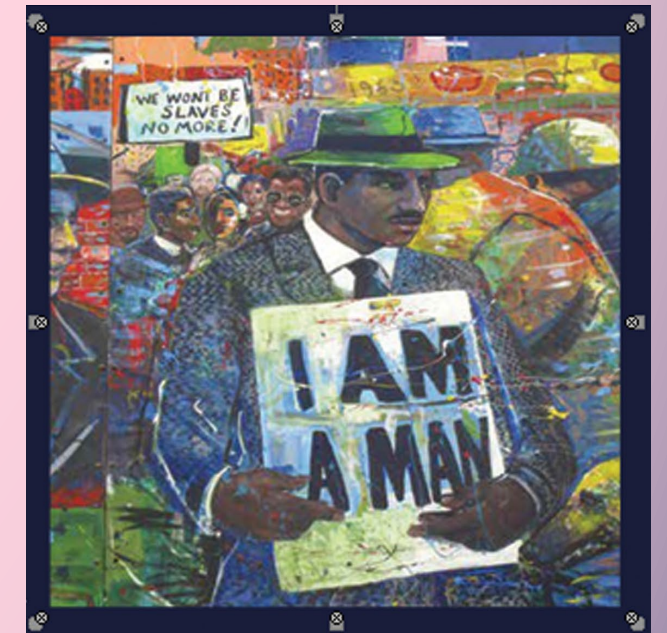
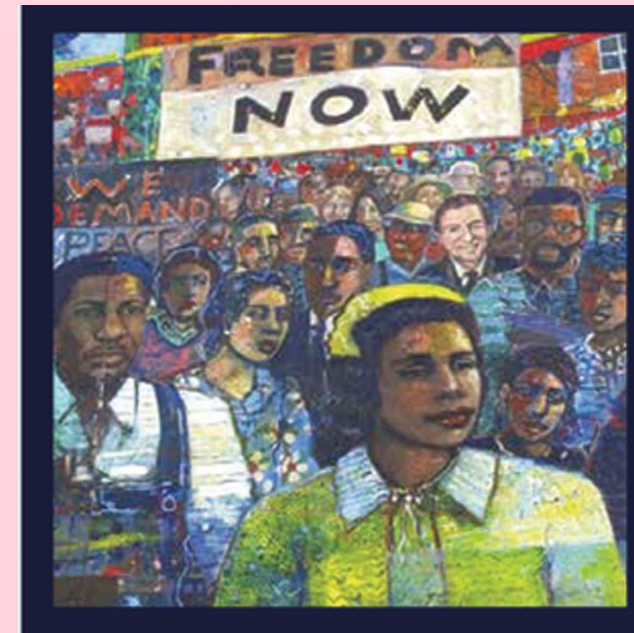
Watch the full message here: <https://vimeo.com/418125427>



"Today, we don't burst into a new world. We begin it!"  
-Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

# LEADERSHIP MATTERS

WE HAVE NOT COME SO FAR!  
TO BE SO FAR...!



"The LORD works righteousness and justice for all oppressed."

What does it mean to vote! What does it mean to be involved?

The year 2020 has been challenging for America. More so, because of the recent police brutality and violence committed on the street in the ruse of restoring peace. While many of us have been witnessing such acts of racism and discrimination for decades, the youth were affected by it more this year than the years before.

Therefore, it is highly important for all of us to come together to vote this year. There are many first time voters amongst us since the last election. Imagine the change we can bring if we become actively involved in the future of America.

Registering and voting are one of the most momentous things we can do.

**Remind yourself that:**

***"The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor but without folly." — Jim Rohn***



In the same vein, we need to show courage and bravery as we head to the polling stations. Our predecessors have shown us how peaceful protests, written texts, and determination can change society. Please think of how the Civil Rights Movement began, as a small spark and led to a wildfire that helped the Black American community to receive the rights they deserved. Remember the many sacrifices leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, and many others made for the future generation. They did it so we could have a life they could never fathom.



They had a dream, and we need to hold onto those dreams so that they truly become a reality for the generation that comes after us. We need to show the same spirit as we face yet another onslaught of racial slurs, media propaganda, and societal discrimination in all facets of life.

#### After all:

***“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.”***

***-John Kenneth Galbraith***

#### Also:

***“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”***

***MICAH 6:8***

# HOW LEADERS RESPOND IN A CRISIS?

## Gather Your Thoughts before You Speak

You can't avert a crisis if you don't keep your calm and composure.

As a leader, you don't get the right to panic before others. You can panic behind closed doors all you want. But, in front of an audience looking up to you for direction and a way out of the crisis, you need to put on a brave front. Instead of speaking your mind, take a moment to gather your thoughts and evaluate the situation before you.

## Learn More about the Crisis before You Act

Before acting on it, you need to get a clear understanding of the entire situation playing in front of you. You can't come up with a plan if you don't know what you're dealing with. That's like shooting darts in the dark! Instead, you need to delegate tasks to different people on your team and then use the information as ammo to develop a constructive plan.

## Don't Forget to Be a Team Player

Even though the decision-making powers are with you, you're human, which means you can make errors and have oversight. If you take all the decisions alone without consulting other key members of your team, you can make a grave mistake. A good leader takes everyone along with them. They don't travel the road alone.

Therefore, it's essential to regroup with others to discuss the crisis and come up with solutions together as a team. Yes, mistakes can still happen, but it's not reflected as badly on you if you had made decisions by yourself, without discussing it with people involved.

## Act with Promptness, Not Speed

When you're dealing with a crisis, you don't have time to deliberate over

it for months and years on end and, sometimes, even weeks feel as too long. As a leader, you have the responsibility to provide direction and react to the crisis promptly.

However, if you hurry and make a decision within one or two days, it can make everyone around you more nervous than confident. Making a hurried decision at the start, only for it to fail, will make people lose confidence in your leadership. Do act promptly, not quickly, if you want positive results from the decisions you took.

## Manage People's Expectations

When a crisis rears its ugly head, people just want it to be over within a few hours. However, that's not possible. You'll need to manage their expectations by addressing the scope and size of the crisis at hand.

The words you use at this moment matter greatly. Your words shouldn't spread panic, and, at the same time, your words should convey the magnitude of the crisis.





# HOW DO WE REDUCE ANXIETY DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY?



sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.  
-Psalm 34:4

Fear and anxiety have stayed with us, at times of uncertainty. They've surrounded us, enclosing in on us. When we have nowhere to turn; we look up towards God to help us out through these trying times. We ask Him to reinforce our faith, and take away all our fears and anxiety. Darkness is always followed by light. Our religion is our coach – boosting out morale, teaching patience, and strengthening our belief.

***God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble – (Psalm 46:1)***

## God Promises to Look after You

Do you remember the story of Abraham? God asked him to leave his home to become a wandering nomad. He didn't know where he was going, how God would provide a son, and what if he was killed or enslaved by a foreign ruler. He lived each day with uncertainty. He didn't know what tomorrow had in store for him.

God took care of Abraham throughout this difficult and challenging time. Things didn't go the way he wanted them to and took longer than expected as well. He faced many obstacles along the way, but God didn't break His promise.

When you trust God, He fulfills His promises; God always does. Just because he may choose a different path, one that takes longer, to answer your prayers – a way out of your current situation – He will lead you there regardless.

## God Never Stops Working

Do you feel forgotten by God because you prayed for something to happen, but it didn't happen quite the way you wanted it to? In reality, what we don't realize is that God works in mysterious ways. Just because something you prayed on didn't come true doesn't mean that God has forgotten about you. No, it means that God has something even greater and better planned for you.

He works around the clock, even in times when your faith in Him becomes shaky. The biblical tale of Israel comes to mind. The people of Israel were promised a Messiah who came after hundreds of years. God is at work right this second. When you feel anxious during times of uncertainty, keep praying, and never lose faith in God because He is working to create a better future for you.

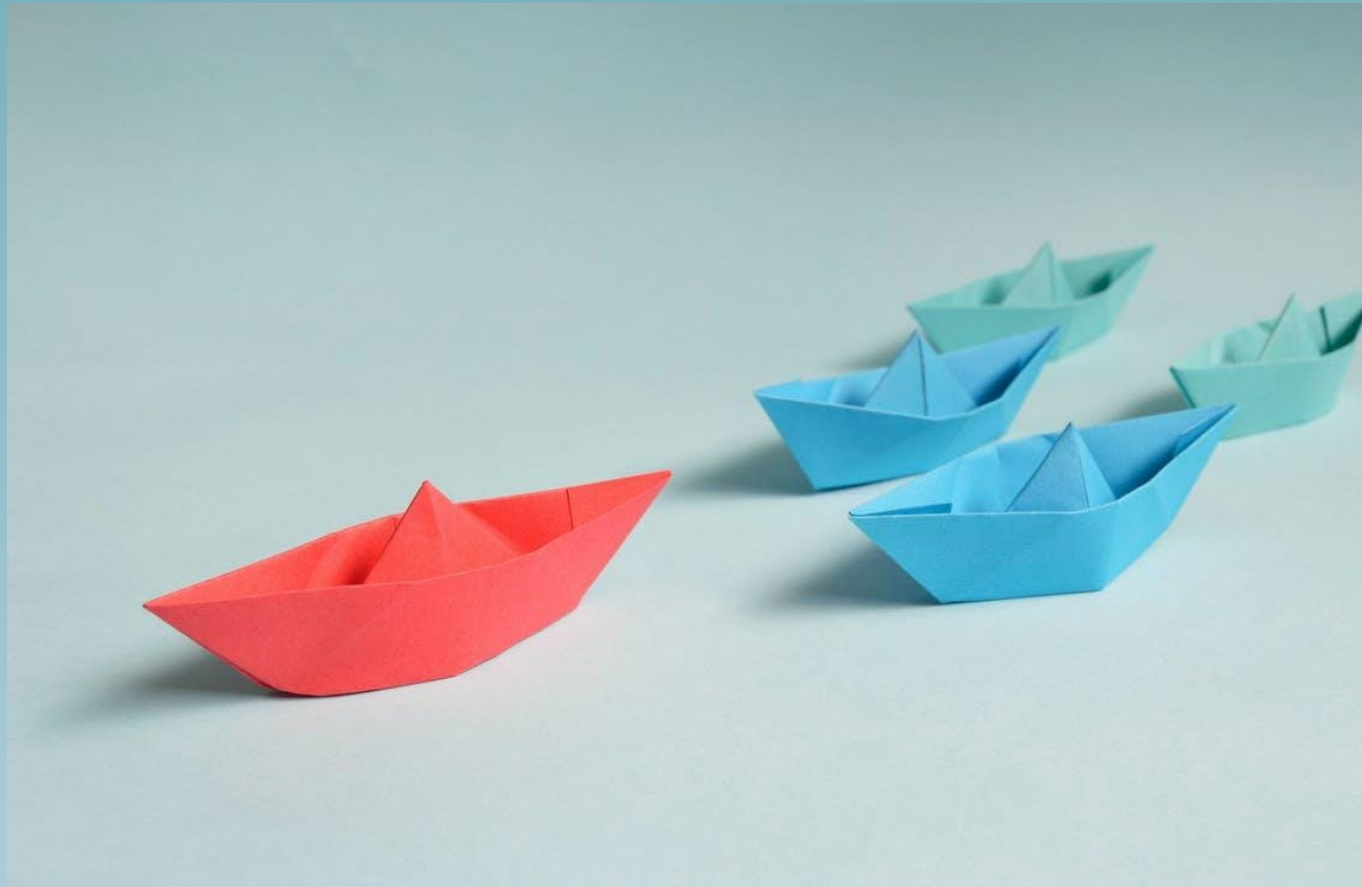
## God Always Provides

God walks beside you in times of uncertainty, closely following you and creating paths before you to choose and follow. When anxiety and fear threaten to take over you, look around at His magnificent creation. The rain falls, animals have shelter and food, and the sun rises and sets each day. If God can provide for His creation, He will provide for you.

You are one of His beloved people, and He will never let you be on your own in uncertain times. God sent Jesus, His own Son, to protect His beloved people. If He could send His Son, you already know the answer – God will definitely bring you out of these testing times.

***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus – (Philippians 4:6–7)***

# LEADERSHIP WITHOUT VALUES AND THE CONSEQUENCES



“People who are truly strong lift others up. People who are truly powerful bring others together.”  
— Michelle Obama

Leadership without values is not leadership. Leading without values results in consequences, not just for you, but for your followers as well. Personal values shape your decisions and behavior and act as a driving force for creating values for others to live by.

Let's find out how values play an important and fundamental role in leadership:

## Guide Your Decisions

Leaders have to make several decisions. Some are harder than others. Some are faster, and some take time. Let your value system be your guide in whatever decision you make. When you have a decision to make, do it consciously in the beginning. Then practice making decisions intentionally, but subconsciously base it on your value system.

## Strengthen Your Ability to Influence

It's your values that make you passionate about specific subjects. When you use your values to communicate, you connect and influence others. You fascinate people when you speak passionately about a subject. They're drawn to you like bees to honey. You're a leader when you can get the entire room to listen. You're a leader with the innate ability to persuade, influence, and inspire.

## Create Clarity

Without clarity, focus and productivity go out the window. Being unclear about your values can weaken you as a leader. When you've to make a decision, even the smallest one, you'll feel puzzled, confused, and struggle to make it. You need to be clear about your values and what you stand for if you want to step up to a leadership role in the future.

## Reduce Stress

Stress is contagious. If one person looks and feels stress and voices it, it infects the entire room. Leaders can't be stressed in front of their followers. If a leader is stressed, the followers will lose hope. It's hard to hide your stress, but for a leader, it's a trait they need to master.

Being clear about your values can help you communicate better, reduce stress, and make decisions faster.

## Guide Your Actions

Whatever you do in your life, whether it's lying or telling the truth, it's your values guiding your actions. Your values determine if it's okay to lie or tell the truth in a certain situation. When your actions are guided by your values, you'll be a more productive, confident, and effective leader.

You can't rise to a leadership position without values. You'll meet a lot of consequences along the way if you don't have a value system that you follow and use to navigate your life. Some of the consequences you'll come across include without a value system in place:

- Unable to tackle and overcome challenges
- Unable to inspire confidence in others
- Unable to create unity among people
- Unable to build a productive, talented team to support them
- Unable to find meaning in anything they do

Get rid of the “unable” and be “able” to tackle and overcome challenges, inspire confidence, create unity, build a productive team, and find meaning in things.



# GENERATION Z: **UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD FROM THEIR POV**

HOW IS GENERATION Z CONTRIBUTING TO HELPING OTHERS?



## **Many Teens from Generation Z Are Volunteering for Community Service**

There is a growing trend for volunteer work by teenagers in recent times. Gen Z is opting for volunteer work for various reasons. Below are three common reasons why more teens are volunteering for community service programs.

### **It Improves Their Chances of Admission in Colleges**

One important reason why more Gen Zers are participating in volunteer work is that it helps with their college applications. Students with community service experience have a better chance of being accepted into a university. There is a lot of competition to get into the top universities. Colleges prefer students who can give back to their and other communities.

A report last year by the Pew Research Center shows that Gen Z s is more inclined to pursue college education than previous generations were. Therefore, volunteering for community service helps them achieve those aspirations.

## **It Helps Them Gain Popularity Online**

Social media is an important part of Gen Z's lives. They grew up using technology and social media websites. As a result, a lot of them take their social media personas quite seriously. The image that they have on social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat directly affects their lives in person.

Becoming popular on social media is a great way of making more friends and gaining popularity amongst your friends in school and college. One way through which they improve their online personas is by engaging in volunteer work. Whatever work they perform can be posted on social media and earn them more 'likes'. It becomes a cycle of validation. Where, they do good work and are recognized and appreciated for it by others on the internet.

## **They are Passionate about Volunteer Work**

Other than the two reasons above, some teens are volunteering for community service because of personal passion. The social work they participate in tackles some social and cultural issues that are close to their hearts. Many teens are passionate about their volunteer work because it directly affects them and their community. Whatever their reasons are for choosing to participate in volunteer work, there are greater positive changes in various communities across the country because of them.

## **Gen Z is Concerned about the Ethics of Corporations**

Gen Z is concerned with buying products and services from brands and organizations that value ethical practices in their production process. It means that Gen Zers tend to avoid companies with bad labor practices or don't use sustainable processes when creating their products.

This has helped change the way corporations function. A lot of them have become more environmentally conscious as a result. This is generally done to appease their young consumers. Nevertheless, there is still a positive change in how production processes are managed.

Whatever reasons teens may have for volunteering in community service, there is no doubt that their efforts are helping others.





# WHAT DOES GENERATION Z WANT IN THEIR FUTURE?



Gen Z is the youngest generation of adults in the world right now.

Therefore, they will be instrumental in shaping the future. Here are some ways that Gen Z is making a difference in society as we move forward.

## Gen Z is Moving Towards a More Tolerant Society

Gen Z is embracing diversity more than ever. They are more vocal about their identities and aren't ashamed to express what their views are about the communities they belong to.

As a result, there are a greater number of accounts of their everyday experiences on social media. Through experience, they highlight some of the prevalent social issues in the country.

Greater exposure to the struggles some communities face can help people be more empathetic toward each other. A more tolerant society is important; it will afford everyone the same level of opportunities to be the best versions of themselves.

## Gen Z is Advocating for Greater Action on Climate Change

Climate change is a real concern for all of us, but it affects the younger generations more than it does older generations. Realistically, they have a longer time to spend on the planet than older generations do. That is why Gen Zers are more vocal about the effects of climate change.

Greta Thunberg is an excellent example of a Gen Zer who advocates for better care for the environment.

She has made great strides in highlighting the effects of climate change and the required actions that should be taken to slow the process.

Other than Greta, countless people from Gen Z have been vocal about climate change on social media platforms. A lot of the conversation is directed toward the effect large corporations have on the environment. Large corporations and a few of the richest people in the world are responsible for climate change the most. Because of that, there isn't as much discussion on each individual's responsibility for preserving the planet.

## Gen Z Wants to Find Better Jobs

The youngest generation of adults is more critical of corporate culture and its practices. They believe that they need more hands-on approaches with choosing the internships. They want to develop some professional skills before they start seeking the jobs they want to do.

Therefore, more Gen Zers are looking to pursue a college education after they get some work experience. Many fresh graduates have no work experience. This makes it difficult for them to find the jobs that they want to do.

That is why many people from Gen Z are opting for training programs after high school. This gives them some soft skills needed for professional life. After that, they seek employment for a short time before they apply for a college program. This way they have a college degree and work experience. This greatly improves their chances of procuring employment in the places where they want to work.

Things change as time does, and as Gen Z grows older, it'll become an active participant in our society



# IS GENERATION Z'S FAITH GETTING WEAKER?

Change is inevitable. Each new generation of adults has different worldviews that don't exactly match with those of the generation before them. In the case of the youngest generation of adults, Generation Z, there is less importance given to religion, its practices, and its values. Here are a few reasons why the relationship between Generation Z and belief is getting weaker.

## IS GEN Z'S FAITH REALLY GETTING WEAKER?

Yes, study shows that it is. A report by Pew Research Center shows that the number of people who identify themselves as religious is decreasing with each successive generation. Therefore, Gen Z is the least religious generation from the generations from the past century.

## GEN Z DOESN'T WANT TO FOLLOW A SPECIFIC FAITH

Many of them aren't religious, but that doesn't mean they're non-believers. Many of them are replacing the word religious with spiritual. This means that they're not focused directly on religious beliefs, practices, and traditions. Instead, they're more focused on an abstract understanding of a higher spiritual force that is not well-defined.

## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IS UNDERSTOOD AS A COMMUNAL IDENTITY

A large number of Gen Zers consider their religious identity as



communal identity. This means that they participate in some religious traditions just because their community does. It becomes more of a shared cultural experience rather than an individual and spiritual one. In essence, religious events are considered cultural traditions instead of practices done out of faith.

## THE INTERNET IS BROADENING GEN ZS' PERSPECTIVES

Access to the internet also has a role in creating this disconnect between Gen Zers and faith. The internet offers everyone access to different perspectives from various communities. This way, Gen Zers learn more about people from different communities with similar views as theirs. This way, they broaden their perspectives and choose to identify themselves in more ways than one.

## GEN Z IS MORE AUTONOMOUS WITH CHOOSING THEIR IDENTITIES

They're choosing to identify themselves in different ways and on their own terms. This includes race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. A lot of marginalized Gen Zers speak openly about their experiences and the struggles they face. Many of them share their views with others on social media websites. These platforms allow them to have their opinions validated by people with similar views – thus, allowing them to feel more confident about who they are.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GIVE THEM MORE AUTONOMY?

A study shows that less religious young adults were less racist than religious adults. Those not religious are more tolerant of diversity in general as well.

However, the problem isn't religion here; it is how the practices are forcefully indoctrinated into homes. The lack of choice makes people less understanding of different perspectives. There are many good things that we can learn from religious teachings. We just have to allow people more choice in what they choose to believe in.

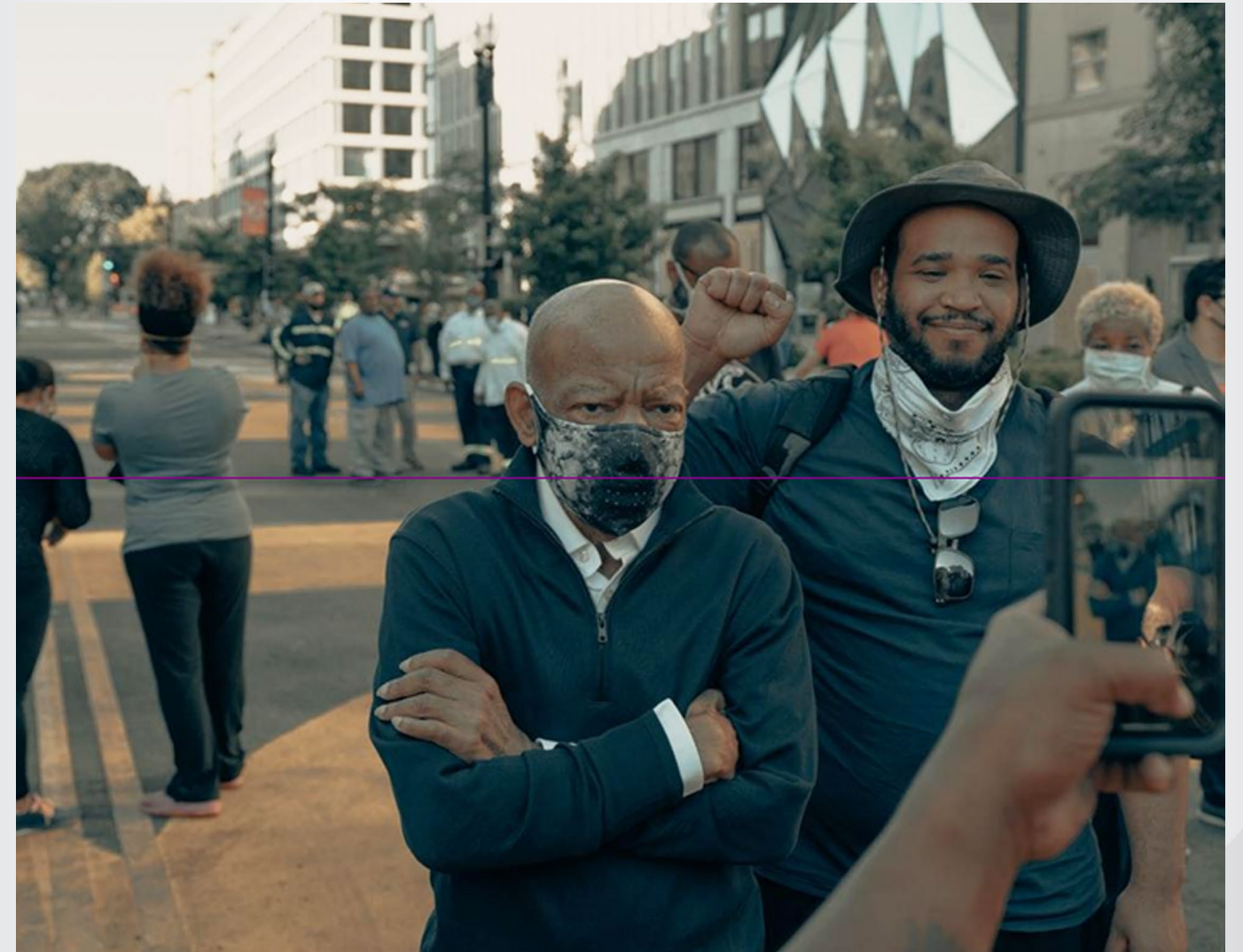
A prominent characteristic amongst most Gen Zers is their advocacy for choice. In order for them to get closer to their faith, they must be given the freedom to choose that faith themselves.





## LESSONS FROM THE YEAR 2020

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN LEARN FROM THE LIFE & LEADERSHIP OF JOHN LEWIS



*"Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society. Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet."*

-John Lewis

There has been a lot of sorrow this year, and the passing of the legendary leader and Congressman John Lewis only adds to that melancholy. However, as saddening as his death is, we must take a moment to reflect on the positive change he brought in this country. He has been, and always will be, an inspiration for young people in this world. Here's what young people can learn from the life and leadership of John Lewis.



## A THROWBACK AT HISTORICAL TIMES

While John Lewis was not a nation-wide symbol of hope, justice, and freedom until his survival in 1965, he was already engaged in bringing freedom for Black people in the country at a young age. Lewis was born in the 1940s and, thus, grew up in segregated America. Because of that, he was only a boy when he began to experience the effects of racism. And that only increased as he grew older.



### LEADERSHIP AT A YOUNG AGE

John Lewis did not want to be passive about the racist conditions of the country. When he was only 15, he stood in front of a crowd and gave his very first public sermon. From that point onward, he kept pushing to get his voice, and the voices of Black people, heard across the country.

### THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

"When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."

From a young age, Lewis understood that we must work together to bring about positive change. Thus, in '61, he formed a group along with 12 other people, seven of whom were white people, called Freedom Riders. This group aimed to bring change to existing laws that prohibited black and white people from sitting beside each other on public transportation.

## LEWIS WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

Due to his participation in the fight for equality, he was beaten at the police's hand. However, that didn't stop him. He spent seven years as the director of the Voter Education Project. This project had aimed to make it possible for minorities to cast their votes.

After that, he made his transition into politics and eventually became a congressman in 1986. He held this position till 2018, as he was re-elected 16 times during 1986 and 2018.

### COMMITMENT TO FAITH

John Lewis did not allow his faith to falter, even after seeing so much hate and injustice around him. His faith was a pillar of personal strength for him. It provided his activism with a framework—a lens, of sorts, in determining what is and is not right.

His unwavering faith served as a source of hope for him. He reminded himself that good things do come to those who wait. All we need is patience, trust in God and compassion for others.

## A STRONG LEADER TILL THE END

Lewis understood that there is no place for hate in this world, and this kind of wisdom is what made him a legendary leader. He even forgave those who physically hurt him and showed them compassion when they apologized to him. These qualities Lewis possessed showcase his closeness to his faith—for Jesus said to love your enemies, and that is exactly what Lewis did! John Lewis was an astounding man and will always be remembered for the legacy he has left behind.



Coronavirus  
Pandemic:

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The coronavirus has hit all of us hard, but do you know the one generation hit the hardest by this is Generation Z. This demographic is made up of a group of children, teens, and adults between the ages of 7 and 22 – they are all out of school and sitting at home.

Every generation has its challenges, and this is theirs. But the question is, "Will they rise to the challenge?" Reports coming on this generation taking the COVID-19 have been mixed.

### Generation Z and the Start of COVID-19

The start of COVID-19 saw Gen Z, including the Millennials, partying it up. Both didn't take it seriously, and, when called out, they blamed each other. With the situation going from bad to worse in a matter of weeks, we witnessed a shift in mindset.

These two groups started keeping track of the growing coronavirus pandemic. The concern grew and slowly led to Generation Z coming out of the woodwork, joining the Millennials in spreading awareness of COVID-19 and the importance of social distancing and staying self-isolated. Both generations are actively trying to rise to the occasion to tell others to stop taking public transportation, wash their hands regularly, and use hand sanitizers whenever they have no access to water.

### Generation Z Statistics

The following statistics are proof that for Generation Z, things are starting to become serious:

- 81% of Gen Z has started to wash their hands more
- 42% of Gen Z are avoiding taking public transportation
- 74% of Gen Z are practicing social distancing



Generation Z was the untouched generation. Unlike the other generations before them, they have never been through a war or a national crisis, but now, they're facing a turning point. Even though they're finally taking action and an initiative to take precautionary measures and encouraging others to do the same, they still have a long way to go.

This is the right time for Gen Z to take risks and come to the forefront to brand themselves as future leaders among their community.

### Generation Z: Time to Rise Up

Generation Z, your future is threatened. This time isn't for laughing at the memes and sharing them across your different platforms, but for being leaders in your community.

### People are out of jobs. Education is suffering. Elders are at risk.

This is your crisis, and those who stand up during this grave time will be remembered. You're fighting your own war, but from home and with yourself. Staying isolated is tough, but this is where your patience and determination come in.

Gen Z – if not all of it, then most – is still out there, not listening to the warnings. It's up to you to set an example for them and get your voice heard, not in person, but from behind your screen. Instead of playing games and sharing memes, encourage others to stay indoors.

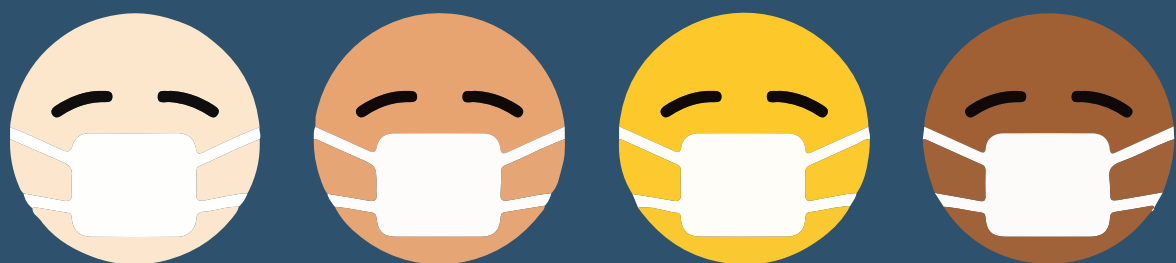
Use your various social media platforms to spread awareness, not fear. It's up to you to face this coronavirus pandemic, but you're not alone. Others in your generation will face it too in their own communities.

### Will you accept this challenge?

Will you become one of the future leaders to lead the movements of maintaining social distance and good hygiene?

Take one step forward, and others will soon join you, not behind you, but beside you, walking to cancel this coronavirus pandemic.

### COVID-19, YOU'RE CANCELED!



*"I think a hero is any person who's really intent on making this a better place for all people."*  
– Maya Angelo

How can you thank frontline workers aka the everyday heroes in your area?

Today's heroes don't wear capes, nor do they have superpowers. They're ordinary men and women who continue to work day and night to do extraordinary things.

You see them daily at the grocery stores manning the cash counter and stocking shelves, or on the streets running deliveries for people stuck at home. You see them donned in masks, gloves, and scrubs, working diligently to treat patients and contain the disease.

Essential workers include the first respondents, healthcare providers, waste management workers, delivery guys, teachers, and retailers. You've met them before the pandemic, but these days they're working above and beyond their capabilities. They do it all to ensure that your world runs smoothly despite the chaos outside.

Therefore, the Youth with a Future (YWAF) took some time to createprovide a video that honors these brave men and women. We want to thank every individual that works on the frontline and those present behind the scenes. Without them, it would be impossible for us to spend weeks and months inside our homes.

Their unselfish acts are what make the community stronger and well-protected. Words do fall short of what they mean to us. All we can do is pray for their lives and do what we can to thank frontline workers in every way possible.



# HOW TO THANK FRONTLINE WORKERS IN YOUR AREA?



THANK YOU

You might be at home, but you can still thank frontline workers. The idea is to spread the message of love and participate in charitable acts that support them.

Here's what you can do to thank frontline workers:

## Spread Positivity

The easiest way to appreciate essential workers is by expressing your gratitude.

You can do this by sticking a DIY(does everyone know DIY do it yourself) sign outside the house or in the window for essential workers. Write a quick thank you message on the sign and then place it in a prominent position. If you're artistic, you can illustrate or paint these messages in colorful combinations.

You're bound to make them smile and feel acknowledged by this silent gesture.

Besides this, you can post thoughtful messages on social media, create video compilations, or share their heroic tales.

## Lend a Hand

A little kindness can go a long way in these testing times. If you've got an essential worker living in your area, the whole household/neighborhood can pool in to help them. Think of the different things that their daily obligations are stopping them from performing. It could include prepping meals, shopping for groceries, and taking care of their young ones.

You can pay back their kindness by lending a hand. It could be done by finishing household tasks, getting the groceries for them, and giving them an extra tip. You can also donate to charities that supply PPE, food, and the necessary PPE to essential workers.

## The Final Thanks

In the end, staying at home and adhering to social distance policies is another way to thank frontline workers. The more cautious we are, the less we suffer. It also prevents us from overburdening or risking essential workers we meet day in and out.

So what are you waiting for? Go thank frontline workers in your area.



## PRAY FOR OUR NATION

Pray that you and other believers would seek God in humility and that God would bring healing to our nation. "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Pray that our nation would be able to emerge from its darkness and seek God and be a light to others. "See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." Isaiah 60:2-3

Pray that you, your family, and our nation would follow God and be blessed. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance." Psalm 33:12

Pray for all those in authority, for all of our leaders in government. "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray in this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity." 1 Timothy 2:1-5

Pray that God would give wisdom and knowledge to our government leaders and anyone in any position of authority. "Praise be to the name of God forever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." Daniel 2:20-21

Thank God that He is the one in full authority and in control of our nation. "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." Romans 13:1





RAISING A VOICE:  
**WHAT DO OUR  
STUDENTS  
THINK ABOUT  
RACISM,  
GENTRIFICATION  
& COVID-19?**

## TAKING A STAND: **A JOURNEY FROM SPAIN TO AMERICA** *By Myla*

There was a boy named Luca. Luca and his sister, Romona, had moved from Spain to America. Their parents had to stay in Spain for a little longer. The siblings promised to take care of each other in the United States with their family members. They both felt scared and nervous because their parents could not go with them at this time and will remain in Spain for at least eight more months.

They moved to Denver, Colorado, during the warm month of August. Luca noticed the dry climate and both he and his sister would have to get used to the time change. (An EIGHT HOUR difference!)

They lived there with their Tia and Tio (aunt and uncle), which was a relief. Their Tia and Tio were so warm and welcoming of them to their home. Their home looked a lot like the Spanish-style homes that they were used to. After they unpacked their bags, their Tia and Tio invited them to eat a delicious, four-course meal. During the meal, they caught up with the kids and also discussed starting school on Monday.

As they were getting ready for bed, Luca heard his sister crying in her new room. He asked her "What's wrong, are you ok?"

Romona replied, "I miss Mama and Papa. I don't know what school is going to be like here. I wish they were here to hug me and tell me it's going to be alright."

Luca looked at Ramona and said, "It's going to be fine, we just gotta get through this together. Our family will always be in each other's heart; don't forget that."

Luca and Ramona went to bed to wake up early for their first day of school.

It was a nice, warm Monday morning. It was Ramona's first day of middle school, while Luca was starting Sophomore year of High School. Luca hugged his sister and walked her to the door of her new school. They said goodbye to each other.

As Luca walked onto the High School Campus, he noticed kids looking at him. He



could tell that one of the kids and his friends were talking about him. Luca decided to go up to them and say hello.

He said, "Hi my name is Luca and I'm new here. I moved here to Denver from Spain, nice to meet you."

The kid gave Luca a dirty look and stood right in front of him. The kid looked at Luca, laughed, and sarcastically said, "So... are you the new kid... you look like an immigrant, and in case you didn't know, those aren't allowed here".

Luca just looked at the boy and walked away, silently thinking to himself, "I've never been called that. Why would they call me that? Is it bad that I'm an immigrant?"

Luca felt very embarrassed, shocked, and uneasy about what was said to him.

Days after that interaction, Luca felt he had to say something about how he was mistreated and judged because of his appearance. He mustered up the courage to confront the bully and told him that he shouldn't be talking to people like that if he doesn't know their background. Luca also reminded him that immigrants are people and shouldn't be treated differently. He explained why many immigrants come to the United States. How they hope to build a better life.

Then in a bold tone, Luca said, "If you don't have anything kind to say, then maybe you should stay silent".

Other students heard him stand up for himself and slowly changes started happening. For instance, other students began talking to each other and how they started viewing immigrants more compassionately. Everyone around the school looked up to Lucas as a leader and followed his example.

Ever since that day, he and many others at his school continue to stand up for students who were new to this country or who had gone through the same prejudice. Luca didn't want anyone to feel the way he felt. He didn't want them to be judged by how they look and where they come from. That is why he started a club at his school to make others aware of their words, actions, and how they make other people feel. His ideas became influential and encouraged others to not treat people differently because of their race, religion or ethnicity. Luca and his family are now raising his voice and not standing down when they are judged.

# CHANGING TIMES

*By Rianna*

Ray and Charlie were twin brothers. They were recently affected by gentrification in their neighborhood. They were hurt because their house was not as fancy or as big as the new homes being built. Most of the new residents gave them dirty looks when they walked around the block. It was evident that the new people were racists.

Their mother always gave them advice on how to handle things like the judgmental stares. She tried her best to protect them, but she was on her own ever since their father was killed.

One day at the store, Ray and Charlie were grabbing some snacks before heading to the park. While in the store, people started giving them unusual looks. Soon they realize they have forgotten their masks. The pandemic and its protocol were still new to them.

They paid for their things quickly so they could exit the store.

Unfortunately, one of their new neighbors, a white woman, created a conflict. She started to yell at them for not having their masks. The brothers kept apologizing and trying to leave. Yet, she did not listen to them and continued her rant.

Bystanders tried to de-escalate the situation. They explained that it was an honest mistake made by children.

However, the woman insisted on calling the cops and rang them.

Now, the twins were scared children and were forced to wait for the cops to arrive. While waiting for the cops, the woman continued to yell at the poor kids without any hesitation. She ignored all of the people asking her to stop, including the store manager.

Gentrification has changed the neighborhood. Many of the twins' friends had been forced out of their area. It was due to the high rent, even though they had lived there since birth.

As the new neighbors moved in, they brought new challenges for the boys. They already noticed that racism had increased after the new residents arrived. There was also an increase in police presence because of the color of their skin, and the fact that they were seen as a 'threat' to some.

The kids remembered that their mother always told them. She said, never raise your voice at a cop and always let them see your hands. She taught them to stay calm. So that is exactly what they did. When the police entered the store, the woman immediately stopped yelling at the kids.

The kids told the police that they had realized they had forgotten their masks. That they were paying for their snacks, so they could leave quickly. Next thing they knew, the woman was yelling at them despite their apologies.

The officer then proceeded to the store manager to ask if the kids' were telling the truth. After finding out the facts, they realized that this wasn't about the boys not having a mask. It was simply about the fact that another racist white woman saw the two young African American kids as a danger to her. The officer let the boys go, while the woman looked on.

The police officer went over to the woman and taught her an important life message. That at the end of the day, we all deserve the same amount of respect. We shouldn't look at anyone differently because of what they have and what they don't.



# LIVING IN AMERICA AS AN IMMIGRANT: **JENNY'S STORY**

*By Vanessa*

Jenny is a young Hispanic teenager who has immigrant parents. When she was young, she really never second-guessed if her parents would be there the next day. As she grew older, she learned more about racism and how racism affects her household.

She grew up in a diverse community, and she believed that it was a great way to live as a community. She had many friends from different races. But it was sad to see many of her friends moving out of this community because the rent kept increasing and they couldn't afford it. She was devastated about the old houses being torn down and new modern homes being built to replace them.

It had a great impact on her as her friends left, and the community was no longer the same. She was no longer around people like her. Jenny wondered, "is my family next?" She always saw her father coming in late, working late hours so that he would pay next month's rent.

Jenny grew up in a very religious family. She would always pray to God that she would never leave the beautiful community. But she knew how police cars patrolled the area because they considered her neighborhood "the hood."

They considered the neighborhood bad because there were many people from different cultures and different races. The people in the community always helped each other when it was needed. Whether it was free food distribution, free back to school supplies, or some other pressing need, everyone helped. But now Jenny and her family don't see the support they used to have post- gentrification. Since then, the amount of racism started increasing dramatically. The amount of police brutality has grown in her community. Jenny didn't feel safe in her neighborhood anymore due to the dramatic changes.

When Jenny started to grow up more and understand more about what is happening in her surroundings. She saw how racism affected her and her family. That being a daughter of undocumented parents would affect how people would see her as a person.

Many people believe that immigrants come to this country to steal jobs and commit crimes. In reality, they come to this country for a better life.

But this isn't a better life, how everyone from her culture is scared to go out because of discrimination. Jenny's parents came to this country to give her and her brothers a better opportunity than they had. All they want from Jenny is to follow her dreams and that their daughter will

become the best version of herself.

She does everything to make her parents proud because her father has been through so much. Her father was found with a cancerous brain tumor and for her to hear that if her father didn't get it removed, he'll die from it. It was very hard for Jenny and her family. Going through such circumstances is the worst thing that can ever happen to a human being. Yet, the family had faith in God. Her father was still here with her to celebrate Jenny's birthday.

Even though things were great at home, she started to realize the cruelty and racism around her. She noticed how society valued certain people while others were mistreated. Being yourself was not acceptable.

Jenny experiences racism every day when she is walking on the streets or at the store. People stare at her, judge her family as if they know Jenny's story from one look.

Many people judge her parents because they can't speak English, or because sometimes they have trouble understanding it.

Jenny always thinks to herself "Why do people say, go back to your country?" When this is stolen land from the indigenous people.

Jenny always watches and sees how many people are being taken away from their families. The horrible way they are being treated at the detention centers. Being a daughter of immigrants is hard for Jenny because she never knows when her parents would be taken away. Jenny believes this land is for everyone, and everyone should be welcomed here.

She also observed that people bullied people of color on social media as they did in real life. Many people of color are always being hated because silly white Americans can't accept the fact that the generation has changed.

Everyone should succeed in their dream and should never be told they can't do it because of their skin color.

Racism has affected Jenny's life because society has told her she can't do anything due to her background. It upsets Jenny how hateful the president sounds when he talks about immigrants. She doesn't like it when he says that they only come to America to be criminals and steal jobs. Even though many immigrants do jobs, white Americans do not want to. They build houses millions of Americans live in, clean streets that would have been dirty otherwise. Jenny realizes that this generation fights for the right and to abolish the horrible.

As the years went by, gentrification and racism continued. She didn't know that she would become a victim of this transformation.

The worst thing that happened in her life was the beginning of the year 2020. Previously, she thought that the year was going to be the best year for her. That was until she lost one of her loved ones. She lost someone she deeply loved, someone she has known her whole life. With that loss, she lost hope in humanity.



She knew life wasn't going to be the same after the loss of her cousin. Her mother tells her that he was in a better place, but Jenny wants to hear his voice and say that everything will be ok. She never thought that someone she deeply loved would be gone in an instant.

The pandemic robbed her of meeting her loved ones and mourning the loss together. With the growing threat, she was unable to celebrate her 15th birthday. She started feeling lonely and depressed. But she still put a smile on and acted like everything was ok.

Jenny was already numb inside when the pandemic hit her neighborhood. It started with her next-door aunties who were tested positive for COVID-19. She trusted and prayed that God was by her side every step of the way. She believed that He put her in this position because she is strong enough to get through anything. Then things got worse as her mother and brother lost her job. She was expected to learn through online school during the weekdays. It was difficult to concentrate when her whole life had turned into a nightmare.

That said, the BLM Movement gave her hope. She is still forming opinions about the world, but she is sure that this movement is beautiful and meaningful.

Africans and African Americans have been treated horribly by police officers and many racist Americans. This world has shown so much hate towards the Black Community. It is disappointing that this has been happening for centuries.

Many African Americans feel afraid to go outside because they don't know if they're the next person to die due to police brutality or being killed racist Americans.

Jenny witnessed this in her community and in school too. Instead of getting the support they needed, African Americans were called 'thugs,' and punished because they didn't understand the lessons as well as others. Only because of the color of their skin, which to her, was beautiful.

Jenny believes that Americans and people worldwide should take action on what is happening in the Black Community. She believes there should be a stop to police brutality, racist Americans, the advantage of white privilege (because it is real).

She also wants society to recognize how racism breeds and is no longer only directed towards the black community. White people hold the belief that they are superior to all other communities. Everyone who isn't white is simply a "danger" to the world just because they don't have the same culture.

Jenny believes that everyone from different ethnicities, cultures, and skin colors, and those that speak a different language and shouldn't be disrespected.

Many people from different countries move to America for a better life, but some Americans make this life miserable. Jenny wants people to stop relying on the standards some members of the society have set for others. She wants people to live freely because no one owns this world.

# LEADERSHIP AND RACE

*By Devijah, Pineda , and Narijah*

It might be the year 2020, but we are still dealing with racism and bullying. People don't agree with each other and so they create conflicts. Luckily, the youth is finally standing up and this generation knows how to raise a voice. This is the story of a young leader and how she changed her school.

Once, there was a girl named Chloe. She played volleyball at her high school. Many kids judged her because of the way she talked, with a Spanish accent, and often had trouble when she was speaking. They saw her as a foreigner because she came from a different culture.

This poor young girl had to go through bullying. Mean kids pushed her around. Even her teammates wanted her to quit the volleyball team.

Later on, her best friend, Emma became aware of the way people judged her when she was with Chole. She did not want to be judged or bullied. The peer pressure forced her to break her friendship with Chloe and bully her like the other children. Chloe had enough, so she thought of protesting. She felt that people should not get judged because of their skin color or how they talk.

However, the constant taunts hurt her spirit and made her feel small. It is why she could not do much against her bullies.

Also, when you're Hispanic or Mexican you're either speaking too much Spanish or not enough Spanish. People think you are talking too fast or too slow. You get judged for everything, so it's never enough. It made Chloe feel upset because she couldn't be who she wanted to be or show people who she is in real life. People always told her to slow down and tell her to repeat sentences because they can't understand her. Many do it only to bully her.

Then one day Chloe made an American friend, Devijah. She helped Chloe learn how to speak and express herself in English. Emma saw this and felt jealous of their friendship.



In our society, there are many kids that can relate to Chloe's story. Many of us are born with different skin colors or speak a foreign language. I do too because of my color and shape. We all try to fit in, but others make this impossible. But we should never lose hope and always return rudeness with kindness.

For instance, Devijah was such a good leader she showed Chloe that she doesn't need friends that mistreat her. She also allowed Emma to join the group, teaching her that friends do not hurt other friends. That forgiveness and kindness were very important.

Devijah played a big part in teaching the school a lesson in kindness. She was never rude, all she did was act nicely and support Chloe. She made things better that way without letting her frustration and anger show. There were many times when she wanted to burst out or yell. Yet, she stayed calm.

The three friends started spreading kindness and influenced others through their strong leadership. I would like to end my story by telling you about what Devijah and her friends are up to now. Social distancing and online learning might have pulled them apart, but they have gotten closer than ever. All three of them Facetime each other and enjoy virtual hang outs.

The moral of the story is that no matter what you should never judge someone because it will all come back. I hope this changes what you think about people and who they are. One thing that people should understand is leadership matters. It is a big responsibility. Many kids don't know the meaning of leadership or responsibility.

However, I feel like communities can grow stronger when they have role models and leaders who spread positivity. We can look up to these people and learn what they have to teach us.

Learning about leadership has a significant impact on my life. I hope that this story shows you all no matter what you're going through, never put down the other people. You need to take a stand and have the confidence to do anything or be anyone you want. Just by showing leadership you can go so far in life.

# JESSICA'S REALITY: **BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

*By Yasmine*

When Jessica was young, her parents got divorced. She lived with her mom, older sister, and brothers. Jessica started school later than other kids her age, but she was a good student. She tried her best, and the teachers loved her.

The only trouble was that she had no friends because most of the children in school were White. They would treat her and her cousin differently because they had brown skin.

In the beginning, the girls could not understand why they were treated differently. Then they got older and realized the true meaning of racism. It bothered them a lot at first, but they tried to get over it. Even though, deep down, Jessica was mad and hurt at the unjust attitude.

Later on, she moved to another school and made lots of friends. Many of her friends looked like her, but even if they were different, she did not pay attention to their skin color. She was also helpful to disabled and differently-abled students. That is because her mom was a teacher, and she taught such children. Jessica was eager to lend a hand because she had always wanted to become a teacher when she was younger.

That is why she had fun whenever her mom wanted help. Whenever she saw someone in need, she helped them. Jessica's friends look up to her because of her love and compassion for others. Her family and friends talk to her if they need someone to comfort them when they are sad or need advice.

It is funny because people who don't know her think she is mean. When you get to know her, you realize that she is very kind. She treats people how they treat her. If you are nice to her, she will be nice to you.

Jessica will go to 8th grade when the school year starts. She is happy about having a great family and friends. The only thing she wants is her dad and grandmother. She was very close to her Grandma and was devastated when she passed away last October.

That is when she signed up for Youth with a Future. It helped her focus and took her mind off things and helped her gain her confidence. She also learned the real value of leadership.



The only thing that makes her sad is her dad's absence. She loves him, but he only calls or answers the phone if he wants. Both her parents are in a relationship with new people at the moment. Yet, she loves them a lot and wished her dad visited her.

Despite her young age, Jessica has gone through a lot in the past. Yet, she knows how to keep moving forward after picking herself up. The only thing that scares her is the 'what if' scenarios where she is afraid of losing her mother. She can not imagine a life without her mother.

When the pandemic began, Jessica tried to stay positive.

She was afraid that her friends and family would get sick because of the virus. News of people rushing in and out of hospitals also scared her. She also had trouble adjusting to online learning because it was challenging to study alone. Then there was the importance of wearing gloves and protection masks when she is outside.

Another thing that caught her attention was the black lives matter movement. It was hard for her to see people getting hurt because they were protesting for their rights. Seeing cops kill and hurt people who wanted to hear, who only wanted justice scared her.

It reminded her of her experience of racism.

She thought, "I can't say I know how it feels to be treated that badly but I know how it feels to not belong because of my skin color."

Jessica is grateful that all that has stopped now. She is safe at home with her mother and family, while her close relatives live only 3 hours away. Despite the coronavirus, she knows that everyone she loves is safe.

In the end, Jessica lived a hard life, but she persisted. She got up and did what she had to do, instead of sitting back. Part of her understands that all it takes to be a leader is to go for it and not let one little thing mess up everything for you. Jessica wants everyone to learn this lesson and know that it is okay to feel sad, but that does not mean you should give up.

She tells anyone who is reading her story to become a leader and not a follower. Becoming a leader is easier than you think, and it helps you.

So, don't give up on your hopes and dreams.

(This is Jessica's Reality, thank you for reading my story)

# MY VIEWS ON THE YEAR 2020 & ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD

*By Keshan*

Let's start with COVID-19. So at the start of 2020, the world seems to slowly change. First, famous people were dying around the globe and then we were told that a deadly disease from China entered the US.

Now let's pause right there. To me China is the country talked down the most on social media and other platforms. I say this because of how people make it seem like they live there. Even if it is true, it is not right to make accusations about a country without proof. People say that those who live in China, they cook food in dirty areas, eat raw fish straight from the water, etc. It is sad to see and hear these things, it feels dangerous to even be around such living conditions.

However, I didn't learn about the virus from the internet. I was in school when I first heard the news from my history teacher, Brooke. She is an awesome teacher and she is always teaching us new things.



That day, she started the lesson by informing about COVID-19 and the death toll. I didn't believe her even though she showed us videos. What did frighten me though was when they closed the schools. It seemed odd to stay at home at the start of the year.

A part of me was happy though, because I thought I would get to play on my PS4 all day. That was the first thing I did after hearing the news.

However, my plans were shattered when the principal called. She told my mom that the school was mailing packets of work for us to do at home. My whole mood changed when I heard that and I hated that moment. I remember having a disgusted look on my face the whole time, when I heard them talk.

My mom rubbed it in my face that I will have work to do. She was happy that I would not miss out on school work. That did not make anything better.

So a few days go by, I sit in my room contemplating my escape. ( I'm joking). Honestly, I was busy playing video games and forgot all about the school work.

Keep in mind it's the beginning of the year so it's still snowing outside and it's super cold. One day, I got a phone call to go check the mail. I did not listen to my mom because I was cooking dinner.

So, my work sat out in the cold, snow, and rain for almost a week. When I got it was all ruined and wet, with slushy stuff on top. It was not good at all!

Online learning is tough. After we set up the computer, I still could not focus on work. I tried working here and there. This goes on for a few months before the school sends a notice. They gave me two options. Either I did my work or I failed the class.

Well, if you know my mom, you know failing would never be an option. It got serious about my studies and started getting up early every day. It was a big challenge for me, probably one of the hardest things I ever did.

The school year ended, and just when I thought the year 2020 had packed enough surprises, my sister got COVID 19. It was weird how she was the only one in the family who talked about it and always said that she would not get it. Yet, she was the first person in my family to fall ill.

At first, it was scary but I was confident that she would get through it. That is how she is, she never gives up. It turned out to be true. She was back to her old self within a month. After recovery, she went on with her life like it never happened.

This was around the same time when things went downhill. Racism resurfaces again, not that it was gone. We hear that two white men (a father and son) kill a young black man. That man was only running down the street, they just killed him for no reason.

That hit me hard, but the news calmed down like it always does. It thought it was pointless and sad. How could people be so violent? How are we still stuck with this mindset today?

Around this time, the virus outbreak goes down a little and stores reopen. People start going out more often. My other sister got recruited by the US Army that month. My mom went to meet her and meet with the recruiter. I was super excited for her and learned lots of new things. For a moment, it felt that things would be normal again.

Alas! Tragedy strikes again. Four police officers murder George Floyd, and this one event changes everything. I felt a negative surge of energy all around me as everyone felt extremely mad. Riots begin and it seems like people don't care what happens around them. They only wanted to express their anger.

It was crazy to turn on your TV and see flipped cars and violence. I had never witnessed anything like this. It was interesting to see how one vent switched the flip in a second.

However, some people were acting downright stupid. It is only my opinion, but I wish they had tried a different approach. I prefer peaceful protesting and getting our word out without violence.

I was happy to see that many people agreed with my opinion. They did not like how some people were causing distress by looting and damaging the buildings. So many small stores and businesses lost everything because of these riots. It was so sad to see all of the things the people had worked hard for being destroyed and tore down.

What upsets me most, is how vandalism and violence became a distraction. That is the only thing people were talking about when we should have focused on making things right and punishing people who were at fault. Millions of dollars were lost and a life-long damage was done in the process.

In the end, I want to summarize my feelings about the year so far by answering three questions. What did I think of the virus?

I think it was very irresponsible for people to start traveling during the outbreak. I do not understand why the government around the world allowed this to happen. Traveling should have been cancelled when COVID-19 was announced.

What do I think of the Racism?

It's pointless because no one race has power over another. We need to accept the fact we are all here for a reason. Everyone has a purpose in life, so why waste it on hatred?

Also, people should stop living in the past and start living in the present. They should not let prejudice and racist views destroy our future.

What do I think about digital learning?

It was hard for me but at the end of the day I did what I needed to do.



# JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL

*By Keshan*

***“For justice will prevail and all the morally upright will be vindicated.” – Psalm 94:15***

Can one man become a millionaire from a government official's mistake? Can karma really strike those who do bad things?

Jordan, aged 40, is a multi-millionaire because of an eventful day 25 years ago. He was charged with capital murder for a crime he never committed. All because he was an African American man, who was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Jordan lived with his mother in Denver, Colorado, in a place called Five Points. He was a good kid who stayed in school. He stayed away from drugs, gangs, and violence. He made it his mission always to keep his mother happy. His mother would always say, “all you have to do is school to 100%, and I will give you the world. But if you don't do school at 100% I can't give you anything extra.”

So on a hot summer day, Jordan was out walking around listening to music doing his thing as usual. He decided to walk down to the Five Points mart and grab a drink and some snacks. Because Jordan lives in a high crime area, there are always police around, and Jordan happened to walk past an officer in his car. The officer then followed Jordan into the store, where a few African American males with tattoos were hanging out. The officer noticed them and immediately put his attention to them. Almost right away, the officer began abusing his power and making the African American males put their hands up, and he started cuffing them when one ran out. Jordan disobeying everything his mother taught him, went and followed the chase. The officer shot once at the African male, and the male running from the officer started mag dumping at the officer. The officer was hit a few times and fell to the ground.

Jordan ran up to try and help the officer, and that's when all the other cops came in and pinned Jordan to the ground and took him to jail. He kept trying to tell the officers what happened on his way to jail, but they didn't care.

They kept saying, “We aint stupid, we know you shot the officer” over and over again.

When his time in court came, the officer who was shot didn't remember anything that happened. The officer who pinned Jordan to the ground swears that Jordan was running away from them

when they arrived. The judge took the cop's side even though there was no proof, witness, gun, or camera to verify their accusations.

Jordan's lawyer is an African American male fresh out of college, and this is his first case. His name is Mike J. Edison. He was at the top of his class and the first person to get 100% on every test in 4½ years.

Jordan was grateful to have someone of color helping him out although there was little to no faith anything would change. Mike went out into the streets and asked around the community and posted flyers. He contacted all the news channels asking for help. Not long after that, people began reaching out to him and showing proof of what actually happened.

Still new on the job, Mike was told that he must show the new evidence to the district attorney's. He was suspicious as these people were trying to keep Jordan in jail. He did as he was told, and he showed them the proof. They had the look of shame and guilt on their face. They were determined to do everything in their power to remove, hide, and destroy all evidence. Mike had his suspicions, so he secretly kept a copy of all evidence at his home.

That way, he had a spare when the DA took the evidence to show it to the judge. Mike went to Jordan and spoke to him about what happened, and Jordan thanked him.

About a month goes by, and there is no new information, Jordan is on his way to court. Once they arrive, they see the DA talking to the judge. They stop taking when Mike and Jordan enter the court. The men notice that there is no other person of color present in the court that day.

Mike is chosen to speak first, and the first thing he says is “have you seen the evidence the DA said they would give you from me?”

The judge looks confused.

Mike, Jordan, and the judge all look at the DA for an answer.

The DA replies, “I left it in your office on your desk sir,” and the judge replies with, “Oh, don't worry about it. I will check it later.” That automatically raised a red flag for Mike and Jordan. After the trial, nothing has changed, and Mike has a plan. He decided to ask for a different judge and show them the evidence himself.

Back at the jail, Jordan noticed the DA coming in and out every other day or so. They spoke to high ranking jail staff members, and it has become peculiar. Slowly, Jordan's privileges are revoked. He starts to notice it when one of the guards tells him he cannot do yard time anymore. Jordan only gets 2-minute phone calls and 5 minute showers. Jordan requested to speak with his lawyer, and it was accepted after four DA visits and 1½ weeks of waiting. Mike suspected they bugged the room and were listening in on their conversation, so he got a pen and paper and had Jordan write down what he wanted to say.

At the last minute, when the jail staff noticed they removed the lawyer from the room and took Jordan back to his cell. When Jordan arrived at his cell, he saw two new inmates. Jordan noticed gang-related tattoos on the Mexican inmate, while the white inmate had white supremacist tattoos on his neck and back. Jordan knew something was wrong, but it was too late. Right when



Jordan's cell door closed, both inmates jumped and stabbed Jordan over and over again. The cell door opened 3 minutes later, and both inmates rushed out.

About ten minutes later, medics came into the cell with no hurry and helped Jordan up and walked him outside to the ambulance where he was transported to the hospital. The jail notified Mike that Jordan had been hurt. His lawyer rushed to the hospital. It was later found out Jordan had been stabbed eight times and had both his arms broken, seven missing teeth, broken nose, fractured foot, crushed knee caps and five broken ribs.

The jail said no inmates should have been in that cell, and they are not sure who it was. Mike requested the cameras, and it showed the DA and the two high ranking staff walk both the inmates into Jordan's cell and lock the door. Mike took a copy of the tape and held onto it for the next hearing.

New judge and new hearing.

Mike is chosen to speak first, and he hands the judge the evidence from the public and the videotape from the jail. 25 minutes later, the judge comes back and looks Jordan into the eyes and says,

"You were beaten, striped from your family, accused of murder, miss treated, and wrongfully convicted."

She then looks at the DA and says, "You lied under oath, hid evidence, used other inmates to try and kill Jordan, and stripped Jordans' rights."

She tells Jordan that all charges on him have been dropped, and he is now a free man. The judge then asked Jordan to be removed from the courtroom and reunited with his family. The DA were sentenced to 20 years in federal prison without the chance of patrol, which matched Jordan's imprisonment.

Jordan wanted to sue the government for what he went through, but his court date wasn't for four months. Jordan racked up \$400,930.00 in hospital bills and he was half blind in one eye. Jordan sued the government for 6.8 million dollars and he won! He was paid about 2 weeks later and he was featured on Oprah's TV show. Jordan paid for his hospital bills and set his mom up for the rest of her life.

He started a group based in Denver called Youth Learn First. This group made Jordan almost 30 million extra before it had to shut down in 2020 due to COVID-19.

COVID 19 hit hard when Mike, Jordan's lawyer, and Christina, Jordan's mother, were tested positive. Jordan took care of his mom the best he could and helped her through these testing times. Then after that, the world was hit hard with George Floyd's death. Jordan hated the fact people used this tragedy for selfish gains. He did not like people looting stores, and destroying things.

He donated \$ 250, 000 to George Floyd's family to help them pay for everything. His generous donation and personal history caught the media's attention. He was interviewed by 9 News to talk about his view on what's going on.

Later on, he participated in a few peaceful protests to raise his voice against racism. He is currently living a happy and content life with his mom.



## THE AMERICAN DREAM: **THE REAL PICTURE**

*By Jesus*

In June 2020, The Supreme Court ruled that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program would continue. Hundreds and thousands of DACA recipients breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Writer Karla Cornejo Villavicencio has been one of those DACA recipients — but she's not interested in writing about "Dreamers." And she doesn't want to be a poster child for the "American Dream." She could be. Her story fits the definition of fulfilling dreams in America. Karla is a formerly undocumented immigrant who graduated from Harvard and is now getting a Ph.D. at Yale.

"The American Dream is a pyramid scheme," she said. "I am like one of the top sellers at Mary Kay, and I am recruiting so many people. I need to warn them that they need to take care of their mental health. Because that is going to be the casualty, the price they pay for the American Dream."

Her new book, 'The Undocumented Americans', is that warning. In it, Karla profiles people who've paid a steep price for the so-called American Dream. Including herself. She writes about her struggles with mental illness. She weaves stories from her life with reporting and narratives of undocumented people she meets in five different cities: New York, Flint, Miami, Cleveland, and New Haven.

She says,

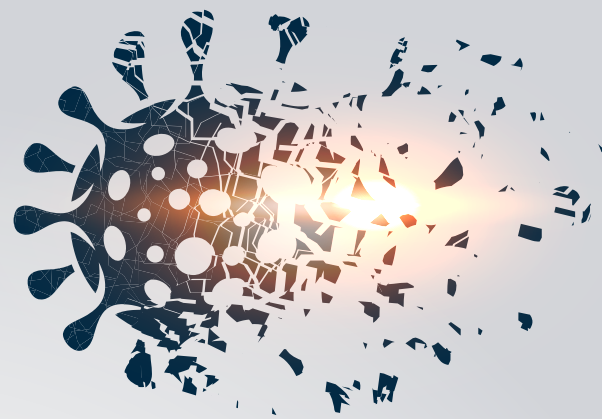
"I wanted to tell the stories of people who work as day laborers. Housekeepers. Construction workers. Dog walkers. Delivery men. People who don't inspire hashtags or t-shirts. But I wanted to learn about them as the weirdos we all are outside of our jobs."

(Excerpts taken from the Harvard Crimson & NPR.)



# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 VIRUS IN THE US

*By Edwin Chavez*



COVID-19 has affected thousands of small businesses and millions of people who lost their jobs. It has also taken away hundreds of thousands of lives. We are living in testing times where the virus has side effects that go beyond health. It has caused the economy to suffer too, leaving many unemployed.

This pandemic has been terrifying for many people due to the lives lost, and the challenges faced. Not just that, medical bills and other resources have skyrocketed too. For example, the COVID-19 test itself is very expensive. It costs between \$100-2000 per person. The cost of getting the whole family tested is higher and impossible to pay for more households. If you don't have medical insurance and are at the hospital, prices can go over \$ 5,000 due to the precautionary measures required for COVID-19.

"I have just come out of the darkness of this thing after 12 days of the worst illness I have experienced in my life and hope to experience again".

Nicole Boivin was one of the victims of the COVID-19, and she says it was the worst illness she has had. "It started with a slight headache that morphed into a fever during the night" It is a very good tip for people who have contracted the disease. You should go to the hospital if you feel these symptoms. That way, you can get help as fast as possible. Only a few people are lucky enough to survive this infection, which is why one must act quickly when they observe early symptoms.

COVID-19 has taken a lot of businesses due to which, "about Half of Lower income Americans Report Household Job or wage Loss due to COVID-19" This has affected a lot of people as they can no longer buy food or pay rent. This situation will increase problems within our society. Over 400,000 beds were ordered in the homeless shelters due to many people going homeless, which affected many families. It is a reminder that one should always save money to safeguard their well-being if they face a financial crisis in the future.

Over 100,000 small businesses will be closed forever in the first few months of the pandemic. A lot of businesses were shut down due to the lack of customers. Others could not provide the supplies they generally had in stock. It has a big impact on our society because some customers can no longer afford daily grocery items. The ones that do go to the store find empty shelves.

Overall, the country is facing a crisis. I hope that whoever is reading this book, stay safe, and take necessary precautions.

Thank you for being part of the YWAF.  
We hope that you continue to be part of our community of aspiring leaders and motivational mentors.



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