

24th May 2020

Dear Future Self,

I am writing to you because at the current time the whole world is in a situation that is completely unprecedented and has been referred to as the World War of my generation, a Global Pandemic! The horrors of these times were not produced by one of the events the world has been in fear of for many years such as an act of terrorism, a nuclear bomb or a financial meltdown, all it took to bring the world to its knees was a simple virus! I wanted to remind you in this letter of what the reality of living through this strange and terrifying time was actually like as when you look back on these events from an academic view point (just like my studying of WW2) and read the extracts from papers and hear the views of the politicians and the world leaders you may wonder if it was all actually real! Believe me when I say that it could have been written by a famous horror writer such as Stephen King or have been the concept of a movie like 'Contagious'. Let me remind you of the time when Mother Nature decided she had had enough of the destruction and waste created by the human race and taught us a lesson no human should ever forget, the time when every nation lived in fear.....the rise of Covid 19!

Today is the 62nd day of lockdown and the death toll in the UK and around the world continues to rise. The deaths in the UK alone are now over 36,700. Schools across the country are still closed and I continue to do my studies online from my bedroom while my younger brother studies with Mum in the kitchen. Schools, Businesses, Parks, Pubs and Bars, Gyms, Hair Salons etc continue to remain closed and both my parents are working from home. My days run into each other and I sometimes find it hard to remember what day it is. My hectic daily life of school, homework, rushing to my different sports and social activities, shopping and meeting up with friends, eating out and going to have my hair and nails done has all stopped. I realise now how lucky I was and how much time and support my family gave me to enable me to enjoy such a varied and privileged lifestyle and I am ashamed to say that I mostly took it all for granted. I now spend my time studying, joining my family for a 'PE with Joe' session or taking exercise once a day outside. Contacting my friends and family through technology on a virtual basis has become a priority and cooking and being in the garden important. For the first time ever, the whole family focuses on the daily news reports as this terrible disease grips the world.

New super heroes have emerged and no one is interested in the drama of celebrity's lifestyles. They are just like the rest of us stuck in trying to reduce the spread of the disease and save lives. Every Thursday evening at 8pm I take pride in lining the streets with family and neighbours where we acknowledge those fighting on our front line, the key workers who continue to carry out their roles despite the risks they continually face. No need to worry about rushing out to buy the latest trend as we all spend our time in comfortable clothes or sports kits. No one worries about getting to the hair dresser or the beauty salon on time for their appointment as everyone orders what they need on Amazon and does it at home. Finally, panic buying has stopped at the shops and although Mum still has to queue wearing her mask and gloves most things are available again after the shortages of toilet rolls, sanitiser, flour and pasta. Having to queue for food has made me realise how lucky we are that we can afford to shop for everything we need and also not to waste anything. Mum only shops once every 10 days because it is stressful and she has to be careful to wash her hands and anything she has touched as soon as she is home. She doesn't let me go with her anymore and there is no browsing for extras. If we run out of anything we wait until the next shopping trip, no more quick runs into town!

This time has really brought my family closer together. My Dad usually works away for most of the week and my mum works full time at a school, with both mine and my younger brothers' social

activities we don't really have that much time to spend all together as a family. In fact, we only really used to eat all together at the weekend. Now that life has slowed down due to lockdown, we are spending a lot more time together watching movies, playing games, going on bike rides etc. Though I'm getting closer to the family that I live with I really miss my grandad, we have a little catch up every day on the phone but it's not the same as being able to see him and have a proper in-depth conversation. I have always been really close to my Grandad and I worry about him being alone as he is usually so active and social. However, I want him to be safe so I am trying to be brave. I also really miss contact with my friends. We have all been having FaceTime calls, virtual sleepovers and virtual birthdays which are fun, but don't replace the usual close contact we normally share. Being able to still talk to my friends is a positive and I am grateful to the technology that allows me to do that, but I know that some people don't have that privilege and that there is a huge strain on mental health for those who are feeling isolated and alone. As well as staying in touch with family members and friends I have also been looking after my elderly neighbours and building new friendships with the people in my village that I never had a chance to talk to before.

This surreal experience has taught me that the world I once lived in was a very selfish place where people rushed around unconcerned about anyone but themselves and their own needs and desires. As human beings have been slowed down the world around us has begun to recover. The skies are clear of pollution, the seas and rivers are clear. Nature has returned to areas where it had been driven out. Political agendas have been set aside with nations seeking to overcome a common enemy and hostile neighbours have become friends. I have been given the gift of time, time to spend with family, time to strengthen old friendships and to make new ones, time to enjoy nature and to appreciate the beauty of the world we live in. Time to realise that material things don't matter and that most of the important things in life we unfortunately take for granted. Time to think about and help others less fortunate than me. Time to think about the person I am and who I would like to be in the future.

Although, like most people, I wish to return to some semblance of 'normality', go back to school and attend classes with my friends and teachers, meet up with friends and family and be able to share a hug, play sport as part of a team and re-join social clubs. I also want to ensure that the new 'normality' reflects the lessons learned from our Covid isolation. That we become 'better' human beings for the experience we have all shared across the globe and that we face our future challenges (as there will be many in the aftermath of all of all of this) together as one race in union with Mother Nature.

Yours sincerely

A Year 8 student