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Somehow, Amid the Coronavirus Chaos There Can Be Peace

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Somehow, Amid the Coronavirus Chaos There Can Be Peace

By Lillian M. Hernandez Caraballo
UCF Forum columnist
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“I rest more, eat better, and have more time for play and quality experiences with my family. I actually relax now,” writes Lillian M. Hernández Caraballo, a journalism student.



Crisis has become the overriding trait of the year 2020. After rumors of war, an impeachment trial, huge wildfires and devastating earthquakes, we now live in the new world of COVID-19. No one shakes hands anymore, wearing a mask and gloves to the

bank is normal, and the lucky ones get to work and learn in their pajamas from the comfort of their own homes.

Not all is trivial, of course; some things have been truly heartbreaking. Italy is letting its elderly die, mass graves are spotted in Iran, and the first shipments of refrigerated morgue trailers made it faster to American hospitals than N95 masks did.

However, through grim times there is hope.

“This pandemic has also brought out some of the best in people.”

Though unbelievable selfishness has been seen — from politicians taking advantage of insider trading, to people fighting over toilet paper in supermarkets— this pandemic has also brought out some of the best in people. I’ve seen entire communities coming together to support each other.

If you don’t have the misfortune of contracting the virus, something else seems to be coming out of this, a slowdown of sorts. Just as the world was getting crazier than ever, and everything was moving so fast that many of us felt we could hardly keep up, all of a sudden — poof! — everything is quieter. Streets are not jammed with cars, accidents have slowed down and even crime seems to be taking a break.

I read that hundreds of thousands of sea turtles have been spotted on empty beaches around the world, such as Brazil and India, to lay their eggs. Due to stay-home orders to people, nature was able to take its course uninterrupted for the turtles for the first time in decades. Another article said the usually murky waterways of the Venice, Italy, canals have noticeably cleared up due to lack of traffic. And the air quality in parts of China and California has reduced its pollutants so much that satellites were able to capture the visible change from space.

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The pollution and overconsumption in my life has decreased, as well. I went from 12-hour workdays and four-hour commutes, to staying home every day. I’m one of the lucky ones because I’m able to work and finish my college instruction from home. And I get to have my daughter all day with me as she also finishes her grade-school work on her laptop.

My car rests — as does my wallet, from gas and fast food expenses. My health is noticeably better, too. I rest more, eat better, and have more time for play and quality experiences with my family. I actually relax now.

I can’t remember the last time I was able to do so much as watch a movie without the stress of my day gnawing at me. I’ve started making my bed every morning. I cook a lot, and I love it. I’m considering what to add to my garden and hope to finish the gym in my garage next week.

Somehow, amid chaos there is peace.

This may be the chance for that break we all knew we needed — not even so much individually, but collectively. As a people, as a planet. We knew it.

We talked about it and wrote about it, how this busy world never leaves time for family and leisure. Well, here it is. This is the time to connect. This is the time to be conscientious of how we spend our time and get to make the most of it.

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Plant that garden. Do that workout. Try that recipe. Call your mom. Paint that picture. Write that novel. Play with your kid. Organize that Tupperware drawer. Restore your balance. Find your peace. Whatever it is that you think will make this time worthwhile, now is a good time to do it. Tomorrow is never certain.

As I said, I'm one of the lucky ones. My busy lifestyle before was affecting my mental, spiritual and physical health. This opportunity has helped give me perspective. I needed a break, and maybe this is just Earth's way of telling us all to do the same.

Lillian M. Hernández Caraballo is a junior planning to graduate in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in [journalism](#) and minors in [writing and rhetoric](#) and [Latin American studies](#). She can be reached at Lillian.Hernandez.C@knights.ucf.edu.