

# How did it change you?

• DR. BATYA L. LUDMAN

**M**y last column was titled “How are you?” In this hopefully post-COVID-19 time, I think that there are lots of questions we must ask ourselves.

Perhaps as we now take stock, it’s time to ask, “How am I?” “How did the past few months change me?” What have I learned, and have I become a better person in a way I might never have anticipated, or am I worse off for my time in quarantine? How can I make these changes last?

In 2014, after the kidnapping of the three boys, I wrote a column on resilience and post-traumatic growth. These were exceedingly difficult times, back then and now again, but many positive things have happened, and I believe that it is important to examine them so that we grow and move forward. This is an especially important self-care learning project. If we don’t know what was difficult and what went well, how can we work on ourselves to best respond to life’s uncertainties in the future? Those who have started diets upon leaving lockdown know exactly what I’m referring to!

Since March, our nurse/paramedic son has been hard at work in the emergency department and its COVID-19 room. As an enormously proud mom, I’ve seen pictures of him all dressed up in his personal protective equipment and barely recognizable.

We’ve all heard some heart-wrenching stories, but he spoke, too, of the cakes and kindness of people who came into the emergency room to shower well-deserved praise on the medical staff.

Recently, too, he sadly shared some very distressing stories. People upset that they had to wait, others angry enough that they were actually violent with the same nurses who a month ago were so valued for their work, now being attacked and once again risking their lives in a different way.

I’d like to think that these past few months have brought lasting change, but we are human, and our memories are short. Hopefully, by looking inward and reflecting outward, we can appreciate who we have become and hold on to this for just a little while longer, if not indefinitely.

It is important for all of us to examine how COVID-19 has changed us and reflect upon our values, after having been suddenly forced to live with such uncertainty.

These basic questions may help you begin to contemplate what you’ve learned, so that you can make lasting changes and be the person you’d like to become.

Get out your pen! Rate each question



*We are human, and our memories are short*

WERE YOU able to be alone and enjoy your own company? (PxHere)

from 1 to 5, where 1 means you strongly agree and 5 means you strongly disagree.

#### Living with myself

I was able to be alone and enjoy my own company.

I had an adequate amount of time to socialize virtually with others.

I managed my loneliness well.

I was content with what I had.

I was satisfied with my sleep habits.

I was satisfied with my eating habits.

I was satisfied with my hygiene.

I was satisfied with my exercise program.

I dealt well with my health issues.

I handled stress well.

I was not anxious or worried.

I was calm and relaxed.

I coped well.

I did not self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.

I dealt with my feelings well.

I used my time in quarantine well.

I was proud of my behavior.

I was patient.

I used social media wisely.

I made good use of entertainment.

I kept busy with hobbies.

I maintained a good daily routine.

I made good use of scheduling and scheduled time.

I made good lifestyle changes.

#### Life with a partner

I had an adequate amount of “couple time.”

I enjoyed time with my partner.

I felt heard and appreciated.

Our relationship felt good.

Our level of intimacy was good.

Our sex life was good.

Our relationship has changed for the better.

Our level of communication was good.

We worked together well.

We parented well.

We dealt with lockdown restrictions well.

I discovered good things about myself in relation to my partner.

I discovered good things about my partner with respect to myself.

#### Children

I was pleased with my parenting.

I did not feel overwhelmed by parenting.

I enjoyed my time with the kids.

I spent a good amount of time with the kids.

I taught my children good things.

My children taught me good things.

#### Other relationships

I reached out to others an appropriate amount.

People reached out to me an appropriate amount.

I learned things about myself that I liked.

I was happy with, and would not change, my behavior.

#### Work

If working, I worked well under restrictions.

I like my work.

I need to make work changes.

I was treated fairly.

If needing new employment, I am actively working on things.

If I have financial issues, I am actively dealing with them.

#### Who am I?

I like who I am today.

I try to reflect to others the person I want to be for myself.

I have used quarantine to improve myself.

I have learned to better relate to religion and spirituality.

I have learned to better relate to time issues.

I have learned to better relate to uncertainty.

I have learned to live better in this moment, the present.

I am not scared of the future.

I coped well with Seder on my own.

I have learned a lot about myself.

I made the best of the situation.

I am preparing for a second wave.

I practice good social distancing.

I wear a mask in public.

I have good hand hygiene.

What has changed for me for the better in the past few months is...

I would like to work on...

What has become more important in my life today is...

What has become less important in my life today is...

If I were to make one change now, it would be...

My overall feeling from having been in quarantine is...

The biggest challenges were...

The greatest blessings were...

Now reflect on your answers. What have you learned about yourself, how have you changed and what will you do with this information? This choice is yours to make. ■

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