

Danniela Morales interviewed by Maria Morales  
February 10, 2021

Maria Morales: Firstly, we are going to start off with questions based off the COVID-19. So, first question, how has the coronavirus changed your life?

Daniella Morales: I think I'm one of the fortunate ones. I don't think that COVID-19 has affected or has impacted my life on a macro-level. I think that aside from not having work for a little bit or having to do schooling online, I've adapted to this new lifestyle that were in very well and it's really helped me have a better inside and who I am and how resilient I am and how at some step opportunistic to where it has helped me grow; my craft, I do nails and having more time to practice doing that and then having more time with my sisters. Also, being able to bond with them more and the time being by myself and having that time to reflect and really focus on me was really great because now I can bring those practices or bring those skills into my home and implement them with the bond... I guess activities that I have with my younger siblings.

MM: Okay. Next question, what was it like to be home so often?

DM: So, when [COVID] started, I was at a SUNY University. I was working three jobs at the time. I was a peer navigator; I was an NDA which is the night desk assistant, and I was a resident assistant. When covid hit a lot of the residents had moved out but a lot of residents also stayed in the dorms, and it was most of the students who came from New York city. I kind of had a sense of community within them because we are all going to the same thing. We couldn't leave Upstate New York to come to New York City because at the time New York City was the hot spot, it was one of the epicenters of COVID-19 and then even if we were to leave Upstate New York, the tickets were outrageously expensive. As college students again, we are already struggling financially so, being up there I wasn't necessarily alone but when I was alone, I was distracting myself watching YouTube, reading books, going on nature walks. My school is surrounded by nature where you can literally see a bear and foxes roaming the campus and that was normal. So, distracting myself by kind of maintaining the same routine that I did when covid hit really helped me to maintain my sanity and really helped me engage with others. [Also, it helped me] to kind of adapt in this distant lifestyle that we're in right now; [the] socially distant lifestyle that we're in right now.

MM: Next question, how did it impact you mentally and emotionally?

DM: I think mentally, I am more insightful about how resilient I am, and I'm also understanding myself in ways where when the going gets tough I really push and try to thrive for this healthy lifestyle whether it is healthy communication, healthy eating, healthy living... I'm really pushing for that prosperous lifestyle, and I brought that with my community of Upstate with again, the students that were from New York City and couldn't go home. I tracked myself to try to create activities that were safe for us socially distant. Also, where we can maintain a mental peace and sanity. Although I was a little anxious when it came to leaving campus because again, I had to come in contact with people that I didn't know, and I had to really almost fear that somebody that they came in contact with had covid or even they had covid themselves. Also, [at] one point my

school campus was a testing center for covid. When that happened, I was also fearful, almost paranoid to the point of even leaving my room because there was a testing center across the parking lot from where the rest halls were. My school did a very good job prioritizing their students and prioritizing the safety of the staff and faculty. They gave us reassurance that despite everything that was going on, their main priority was the school's safety, the staffs' safety and their students, so that was really great too.

MM: And how did it impact you socially:

DM: Socially, I'm so appreciative for living in an advanced technology age because there are so many outlets that I can use to communicate with family members, with friends... For example, there's group FaceTime, there's Zoom, there's Facebook, there's Facebook Messenger where you can do group FaceTime with, I think twenty different people at the same time so, that's really great. Also again, like I said I lived on campus that was very big and they had almost as if it was an acre of land, where you can literally fit; maybe twenty people on there and still be able to social distance with them. That's one thing that I appreciate. When I was Upstate, I probably went to hang out with three people so, social distance wasn't really a big thing for me, it wasn't hard to do.

MM: How did it impact your family?

DM: Again, my family and I were few of the lucky ones, we still haven't contracted covid. knock on wood who won't ever contract covid. Nobody in our immediate family has contracted it and I think it's because when covid hit, we took the news of the virus very seriously. We constantly wore masks, we possibly worked gloves or constantly sanitized and disinfected areas that were constantly being touch on or used. We had that confidence that despite everything just by coming in contact with somebody or all these different people at the supermarket, the laundromats or any other place that we were going to, when we came home, we sanitized, we took our coats off outside, we put them in plastic bags and threw them in the end the laundry as soon as we could.

MM: Are people in your household working:

MM: Yes, so I'm currently working at Green Acres Mall, and I am a sales associate at Bath & Body Works. My father is a mechanic and yeah, I believe that's really it. That's everyone who's working right now.

MM: What have you learned about yourself and your family since the beginning of this crisis?

DM: Well! Like I said before, I think I have a better inside on how resilient I am. When it comes to pandemics or just something big or life-altering as this, again, I have to be appreciative for living at an advanced technology age because if I didn't have the technology, I don't know how I would have been able to communicate with my friends and family in New York City... Or even being able to communicate with others and obtaining news and new symptoms; just learning more about covid if I didn't have the technology available.

MM: What has been the hardest part of this pandemic?

DM: Honestly, I think one of the hardest things [of this pandemic] is probably not being able to eat in restaurants. I think I missed going to movie theaters and/or just saying like a local Dave & Buster's like I would normally do. I think it's a different atmosphere and a different environment when you're able to interact with friends and family in these areas, in these settings. Even now, if I we go to go to Central Park and try to walk around, you have to do [it] with a mask on. And even in the summertime, hopefully we can go back to going on picnics and going on nature walks without having these masks on... Or even being able to do things that we did prior to covid. Yes, so I think the hardest part is really trying to find ways to maneuver around social distancing and staying safe. I hope that one day we can return to that sense of normalcy that we had prior to covid.

MM: Has there been anything positive to come out of the pandemic for you?

DM: Yes, I feel that I've fallen in love with my craft, I fall in love with school more because again I'm preoccupied with school and obtaining knowledge and obtaining information. One about covid-19, politics that's going on today within my friends... Learning new ways to communicate with people I love and how to build a better foundation with them. I feel like I wouldn't have been able to achieve that if covid didn't have because again, covid was more like a pause in my life. I think that if I didn't have this pause, I wouldn't have reflected on myself internally. Also, I was trying to build better relationships with those I care about most.

MM: Lastly, what do you think the nation and the world should learn from this pandemic?

DM: I think that one thing that the nation in the world should just really learn from is just [to] take a second to smell the roses. I don't know, I think covid happened for a reason and I think if we really sit back and find how it's affected us and how we can move forward, we should all come together and just really understand that this happened for a reason, whether it's to help you reflect on your life, on what you have... To show you how to appreciate things more, how to appreciate the little things. Whatever it maybe, I think it's just to reflect and really understand like anything can happen, to appreciate the moment for what it is right now, and not move through life like it's a race.

MM: Okay. Lastly, these are five additional questions based off of Trump and Biden. First question, what are your reactions about the impeachment of Donald Trump?

DM: I think that I expected it sooner... I expected it when the Black Lives Matter protests were going on, just because of how he was enabling. I want to say that he was enabling these protests to happen because he wasn't doing his job as a leader, you know, as a leader of a world power such as the United States. It's important to maintain structure and control within domestically as opposed to I guess sweeping things under the rug.

MM: Next question, how do you feel about Joe Biden becoming president?

DM: I feel a lot better... I feel a lot better with Joe Biden being president. One because I feel as though, Democrats are a lot more Progressive and they're more for the people as opposed to Republicans from what I've experienced. They're more for financial gain as supposed for the people. I'm really excited to see what Joe Biden has to do and from what I can see he selected the

first openly transgender Health secretary which is really great promoting inclusivity and just making change and making improvements. So, I'm really excited.

MM: Next question, do you feel that the former president should have joined the three former presidents to talk about how the future president's plan is for America?

DM: Yes, I think it's important to learn from our past mistakes and I think it's also very important to discuss the future together as a whole and collectively, I believe 4 brains are better than one. If we're able as people to come together and set aside our differences and really speak about what's really important, which is the future of the United States, that would just be so much better.

MM: Lastly, if there were no covid-19 restrictions, would you still attend the inauguration?

DM: Unfortunately, no... And it's because I am still in school and during the time of the inauguration, I wouldn't have had the time to go to DC although I would love to. If I had the opportunity to, I probably still won't go because I just like being home and I watch it from a distance.

MM: Well, other than that I think that's all the questions we have. Thank you Danniela for letting me interview you and probably have a pleasant night and stay safe.

DM: Thanks! You too.