What The Pandemic Taught Me



Most of us agree, living through the past 15 months, is an experience we will never forget. We were and **still are:**

- wearing masks,
- standing in lines,
- running to the store only to find essential items no longer on the shelves,
- experiencing more “intense fellowship” with the people we’re around the most,
- growing closer to people we love,
- desiring more “space” in overcrowded households,
- cancelling planned vacations,
- working from home,
- exchanging our “work” clothes for comfortable leggings and loose tops,
- “Skyping” in our pajamas,
- ordering take out or cooking more and experimenting with new recipes,
- gaining weight,
- exercising more (or less), and working with our children to stay focused in their new “Zoom” classroom environment…whew, that’s a lot!

Everyone has a list (positive or negative) of the experiences they’ve had since March 2020. So many things have changed and the reality is, we may never fully return to our “pre-COVID”

days. However, as we continue to reflect and adapt to the changes, one thing remains the same; the importance of family and friends during our most difficult times.

As the world continued to search for the right response to the pandemic, we were advised to stay home, avoid crowds, cancel trips, and stay away from family reunions. It was difficult being unable to share the joy of a wedding or attend funerals to grieve with family and friends suffering devastating losses.

So, while we *FaceTime'd* more, we continued to miss actual face-time typically accomplished through normal "get-togethers." But we adapted. As someone who plans and enjoys events with family and friends, despite complying with limited and restricted family visits during this pandemic, I had to find other ways to cope during this period of physical isolation.

But, as we start to return to some form of normalcy midway through 2021, I am reminded that we are **not** meant to live in physical isolation. Yes, there are instances when we need "alone" time but, being with friends and family is always rewarding. I took for granted my ability to get together with those closest to me. Having friends and family in close proximity is important for so many reasons. They provide another perspective when trying to resolve an issue, and allow you to engage in thoughtful dialogue. Yes, they may very well irritate you, and hold you accountable, but they'll also laugh with you, cry with you and form a support group unlike any other. Therefore, when we're able to safely meet face-to-face once again, I will remind my family and friends of just how much they mean to me, give them the biggest hug with the widest of open arms and ensure they know I truly missed them!