

A personal note written by Monica Alcerreca - Adjusting to the 'new normal'

Our amazing She-EO encouraged us to write a personal piece on our experience during these recent times. I must admit I am not a fan of writing or sharing personal stuff. Heck, I barely have any posts on my social media accounts! But I decided to write a piece about my personal experience in recent weeks. I think it is a very powerful reminder that, before anything else, we are first and foremost just human. The emotional roller coaster we might be experiencing is likely very common to more people than we think. So here it goes.

“Tough!”

If I could summarize my personal experience of the COVID-19 crisis in one word, I'd say it has been: TOUGH! Yes, it needs to be spelled out in capital letters. At times it feels like an incredibly overwhelming weight to pull. I stumbled upon a Harvard Business Review article titled 'This Discomfort You are Feeling is Grief.' It completely hit home for me. The roller coaster of feelings I was (and continue) going through, completely made sense when looking at them through the lens of the grief process.

For my family, this crisis meant that all the certainties we had taken for granted, were all of a sudden stopped. Like counting on a set amount of work contracts, being able to visit family and friends, or going out to our favourite local coffee shop. Through no fault of our own. In the blink of an eye we lost our normalcy, our physical connections with loved ones and our economic security.

We have had to navigate all stages of grief, in no set order, sometimes multiple of them throughout a day! Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance. All coming in with a heavy emotional load, stress and anxiety. Resisting the urge to repress these feelings and just pause and experience them is challenging. But after letting them run their course, there is usually a sense of tranquility, a slight clarity.

“Meaning”

This opens the door to the sixth stage of grief, which is not often talked about; ‘meaning’. What is the meaning or purpose of all this chaos? When I stop looking at how this crisis has affected me personally, I am reminded that the purpose of this lockdown and overall stoppage of life as we knew it, is in order to save lives, millions of them! And perhaps there are other reasons we will discover when we get past this. Perhaps our home, the Earth, needed a break to recover and we are finally seeing pollution levels go down, who knows?

The ‘New Normal’

There is a lot of talk about the ‘new normal’. To be honest, I have no freakin’ clue what that means yet. But whatever meaning we’ll discover down the road, I truly believe this is a time of opportunity. A time for introspection, for valuing what is truly important in our lives, for growing, and for getting ready for a new chapter. Because we will get through this, even if the horizon seems dark at times.

We would love to hear your thoughts on the ‘New Normal’ or your personal experience during COVID-19 2020 pandemic. If you have a story to share, please feel comfortable emailing it to hello@blankslate.partners

