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In Sickness and in Health in South Texas: Narratives of COVID's Impact

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Glass Half Full: COVID-19

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One of the world's most hated words over the past two years is five letters long. This word makes hearts sink and jaws drop. It makes you feel the urge to sanitize your hands until they are so cracked that the sanitizer burns. To most people, this word is associated with negative feelings; the loss of a loved one or tough economic times. You guessed it, the word is COVID. COVID-19 swept the world off its feet for almost two years. Daily life all around the globe was completely jumbled up by tiny little microbes that some scientists argue are not even alive. These microbes took lives, shutdown the economy, and affected the wellness of billions of people in more ways than just giving them "flu like symptoms". So, you might be wondering, if people dislike this word so much then why are you writing about it? Do not get me wrong, there are a multitude of negative implications that came to fruition because of COVID, however, there are also some improvements to the world thanks to this stupid virus. The impact of COVID on intellectual wellness is astronomical. COVID sparked ideas in many (now wealthy) people's minds that will be a part of our lives forever. The first most obvious advancement brought to us by COVID is in technology. Never did I think I would celebrate Thanksgiving with my distant relatives over the computer on ZOOM. We were miles and miles apart from each other but we still shared laughs and enjoyed each other's company from the comfort and safety of our own homes. Businesses went remote and some will stay that way forever. Employees can work from home and are able to spend more time with their families. In the classroom, lectures are now recorded so students can re-watch the material they are confused on and increase their chances of retaining the knowledge. Additionally, COVID opened our eyes to how much the human race values relationships. For almost two years, we were stripped of in-person connection with beloved family and friends. I believe that this nasty virus made people realize how much they value relationships in their lives, it certainly did for me. And finally, the five-letter word has forced the entire world to become patient and flexible. Everywhere you look wait-times are longer, businesses are short staffed, and supplies are low. In the United States, we have become accustomed to going to the store and picking up more than just the necessary essentials. That luxury was on the edge of diminishing due to COVID. It is in these times that allows us to appreciate what we have in life and not take it for granted. As a very structured individual, being flexible isn't really in my deck of cards. But during a pandemic, all cards are off the table, and I was quickly taught to unwind a little and find peace that life will carry on even if things aren't how they used to be. Amongst its numerous negative impacts on wellness, COVID left some positive footprints on intellectual wellness.