

~~Dear Diary~~

Let's just get straight to the point. My name? It's Alexander. I'm sixteen years old and I live in a small house in the hustle and bustle of downtown New Jersey. As I write this, my five year old brother asks if everything's going to be okay, if everything will go back to normal. Everyone's been told to stay in their houses because of COVID-19, and it's kind of freaky honestly. It's the kind of stuff you see in thrillers. My ten year old sister just told him to grow up, and walked away proud. I can't stand my siblings, they're a real pain in the rear end. Especially my 18 year old sister, who loves to act like she's above us all just 'cuz she's a lil older.

I'll be honest, I feel like no one ever listens to me, and I feel like I'm on a raft, drifting into nothingness. Does anyone even care about me? If I had to use a single word... I'd say I feel neglected.

Our mom can't really keep track of us because she's a first responder. Big responsibility, little time to spend with family. She's a nurse, so she doesn't come home much anymore because of the outbreak. Her shifts starting at 3 am and sometimes not coming back home until 4 days after. Ever since dad died a couple weeks ago she's been in her own little world too.

I began to wonder with my little brother, will everything really be okay? We're all a bit scared and shocked by this, we never thought this kind of thing would happen in our lifetime.

March 30:

Schools starting, again. It was a nice 2 weeks, and we were beginning to think school would never start again. Things were kind of hectic, and my siblings complained about how it wasn't the same, about how learning was way more difficult and they were scared that they would fail. I felt the same, school wasn't going to work out online, and I get that we're using technology to our advantage to try and combat the spread of this disease, COVID-19, but was this really the best method?

I could relate to my siblings for the first time in... a long time. I shared the same confusion and fear, that things may never be the same. We all had a big conversation about how we thought things would turn out, and hey, we even had a good laugh at some points too. It was nice, being able to talk like that and just come to a mutual understanding with my siblings. I feel like things were starting to change!

April 8:

Yesterday, I was up late, finishing a project my biology teacher assigned. But that's not what's important. My mom came back from the hospital around the same time I was finishing up, around 2 AM. No one else was awake at that point, so I decided to go check up on my mom once I was done. I could hear her outside the door, taking off all her clothes and putting it in a bag. It was like decontamination because of the pandemic.

After hitting "turn in" on my assignment, I went into the hallway, and silently opened the door to my mom's room. I didn't want to disturb her in case she was sleeping. But instead of snoring, I heard weeping noises coming from inside.

My mom was curled up on the floor, crying. I've never seen her like this before. Mom was always strong and smiled no matter what, always caring for us best she could. Now she was breaking down and crying. I sympathized with her, and took into account what she's been through. It never occurred to me that she might be holding some things in too. Working with all those patients, and seeing them die before her eyes. Having to stay long shifts and the high possibility of getting infected. Even seeing her own co-workers get infected, some of them dying tragically.

I realized that I've been looking at things in tunnel vision the whole time. Everyone has been here, trying their best yet I felt neglected because of my own feelings. After taking my newfound realization into account, I went to her, and hugged her, telling her that everything is okay, that we would get through it together. She was a little startled at first, and tried to wipe away her tears to cover up the fact that she was crying, but then sat up and hugged me tightly, crying even louder. She went into a rant, and told me, "I was so s-scared, ever since your father passed, I felt like I hit rock bottom... And then the pandemic came and things just went out of control!" She was scared for her life, our safety, and how things would turn out in the future. To this, I told her "We'll get through it together." to which she replied "You sound just like your father..."

April 24:

I feel like that conversation with my mother really helped me see things from a different perspective. A better perspective. The day after, I started talking to my siblings more, and getting to know them better. That's all it took, after a couple days, we all got along!

There we were at the dinner table, the four of us getting along magnificently! We've been able to spend tons of time together, now that we're all shut at home together, and we've gotten to know each other much better than we used to before. It's almost as if... This pandemic brought out the best in us. We help each other out with our homework, we laugh together, and we reassure each other that everything will be okay. Mom even asked, "When did you guys get so close?" and we just smiled. So to answer my brother's question... I believe that if we have each other, everything will be okay.