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Lynne Golodner

subside, I am really enjoying this slowing down.

Because of the stay-at-home mandate, I am with my teenagers and my husband 24/7. And while we have our moments of annoyance, there are more moments of connection, laughter, and coming together than ever before.

My daughter is baking cakes, cookies and bars. She and I take miles-long walks daily, so my jeans still fit. On those walks, we talk and talk, or really she talks and I listen, uninterrupted, totally focused on her in ways that never happen with our usually packed schedules.

In her room, my daughter streams Pilates, yoga and meditation classes. My older son tutors students via video, and takes long runs in the afternoon sun. Every week, each of my kids plans a menu and makes dinner for the family.

I have a guilty secret: I am loving this time.

Don't get me wrong – I am worried for my business and our economy. I worry about the employees I can't send work to, who have been furloughed, worried about their families. I worry about the people we've lost and the people we may lose, and yes, I am scared about whether this virus will touch my family indelibly.

I feel sad and anxious for my 18-year-old high school senior, for the lost prom and graduation and so many other last rites of high school. I wonder whether college will start as planned come fall. And I am sad for my 8th-grader missing out on his end-of-year rites of passage, his year-long project, the faculty vs. students softball game, his graduation, too.

Like so many of us, I am scared about the unknowns of this virus, devastated by daily news of people lost, fearful of the unknown outcomes and future for all of us.

But after the anxieties and fears

My younger son and I are watching a Netflix show together, and he helps me cook. He's writing music every day. My older son and I take hikes in the woods, where we have deep conversations and notice the buds on the trees. There are no distractions, no forced abrupt endings. We get silly. We dance in the living room.

We cook and sit down to eat together, sometimes multiple times a day. My husband and I stay up late trying new recipes or binging on a fun rom-com we discovered from Israel, "The Baker & The Beauty."

I wake without need of an alarm, have time for coffee on the couch with one of the many books I'd been wanting to read. I'm writing more, working on a book, knocking items off my to-do list. And because I always worked from home, the transition was not difficult – it's just that now, my work is more focused, since I don't have to cut it short to race to an in-person meeting.

I've learned to podcast from home, reducing the cost of an engineer, studio rental, and outsourcing all the tasks associated with production. I am gaining new skills, building efficiencies.

I have time for business planning. My entire family sends memes, videos and emojis via a huge text chat that includes cousins, aunts, uncles and siblings who live all over the country. For the first time, we connect daily, fun and supportive, and I feel their love more deeply than ever before.

On Zoom, I've been part of a Shabbat sing-a-long with my synagogue, a cocktail-and-science discovery with Shady Ladies Literary Society, and immersed in a writing workshop with cherished friends. On social media, I've learned who provides comfort and optimism and who is paralyzed by fear and anger.

Never a germophobe, I am now more aware of the lack of tidy surfaces in my life. My house is cleaner than ever, and I wonder how the businesses I patronize will improve going forward, with the new knowledge of just how dangerous dirty surfaces can be.

There are so many positive outcomes to this crazy time. While the economy suffers and people gasp for their lives, the world heals itself. We pay a huge price for this, but in a way it's our own doing. We've ravaged our world and wracked our lives with stress and anguish, and now we are seeing how much was necessary and how much wasn't.

I am seeing the power of simplicity and quiet. I reassess all that I normally cram into my day, awakening to a new way of being and doing. I am increasingly grateful for the wonderful people that I can't wait to hug, so I send texts and emails to stay connected.

Sure, there's a lot that I miss. But I know this is temporary, and I hope that all the lessons we gain from this forced quarantine will stay with us once it ends.

For every sad and tragic situation, we can choose to dwell in the terrible or look for the bright

reckoning. Both are there. Which one will you choose?

Huntington Woods resident Lynne Golodner hosts the Make Meaning podcast and is founder of the Make Meaning Movement. Find her at www.makemeaning.org or www.yourppl.com.