

The virus comes close to home

It was pretty tense for me this past weekend. Since the pandemic began last March, I have tried my best to avoid having to get tested or actually contract COVID-19.

I have tried my best to be as vigilant as I possibly can both at work and at home. I remember back when this all first started and there was talk about where and how you could contract the virus. I remember trying not to go overboard, yet, working to keep myself and my family safe.

When I ventured out to the grocery store, I kept hand sanitizer in my car, along with wipes, taking time to sanitize my hands and steering wheel and door handle and inner door handle in between each store.

I of course always wear a mask, keeping my nose and mouth covered at all times – remembering how at first there were many times I found myself gasping for air, mentally feeling as if I was suffocating.

When I would bring the groceries home I did my due diligence, wiping down all the items before putting them away, fearing the worst - that the virus had hitched a ride on a can of corn or green beans.

Then, as the pandemic drug on and more research was done about how long the virus could live on surfaces and how unlikely it was that the virus would be on our groceries, I relaxed that ritual.

I did however, and still continue to sanitize my hands between stores, and as soon as I get home from the grocery store.

At work, I also continue to be as diligent as I possibly can, keeping hand sanitizer in my office and making frequent trips to the bathroom to wash my hands.

I have also strived to keep staff, co-workers and clients at



a safe distance from me as I assist all, again wearing my mask whenever I am around someone else. I have found myself spending more time in my office because that is the one workspace, I do not have to wear a mask if I am alone.

As a result, my life has been sparred the virus and I have been able to go about my daily activities pretty much as I did pre-pandemic.

I have exercised at the Y daily as has been my routine for years. Again, taking those extra precautions of social distancing and sanitizing every piece of exercise equipment before and after use.

Then the week of Jan. 11, I had a student start her practicum with me. The first day she and I spent most of our time together in my office – with masks on. The second day, I had meetings, so I had my student spend her day at a cubicle while I worked in my office. That afternoon she texted me that she had felt sick with a fever so had gone home, planning to get tested the next day.

Then began the anxiety and uncertainty for me. Did she have the virus? Did I get in-

fected? Do masks really work? Just how many feet is there between my desk and chair and the office chair where the student spent her time while in my office?

I felt confident we had followed all the CDC guidelines, so until she got the test results I carried on life as normal.

Then the text came that she was positive for the virus and was being sent home for 10 days.

And so, I too was sent home to get tested, not to return to work until I had a negative test. Those next 48 hours between getting a test scheduled, taking the test and getting the results were unnerving for me. I believed in my heart I had not contracted the virus, given I had no symptoms. Yet, since I had been exposed, I stayed home from the Y, worked remotely last Friday and waited. I confess I checked the testing website more than once, even though the instructions clearly state the results would take 48-72 hours. I was actually in the attic cleaning when my husband told me an email had been sent that the test results were in.

It was a long walk down the two flights of stairs to the computer where I fumbled to get logged in and navigate through the various security tests and screens. Never did I expect to feel so elated to see the word negative. It was as if my life at some level had been given back to me.

I am extremely thankful to God for sparing me of the virus and continue to pray for those who have been infected, who are struggling with the after affects or for family members who had lost a loved one due to the virus. This is certainly nothing to take lightly and I do not. For me, it just further convicts me of the critical importance of wearing a mask, social distancing and when appropriate getting the vaccine.

MLK

which was written on April 4, 1968, the day King was assassinated.

“We are excited to celebrate the life of a preacher who cared about all people,” IWU Professor Robert Townsend said. “He fought for everyone to enjoy fair and equal treatment, and it is

our job to continue this fight for freedom through civil actions. Today, we take the time to recognize Dr. King’s life and contribution to the struggle and journey towards living together [in harmony].”

When speaking of King, Kenneth E. Sullivan, Jr., an IWU graduate and Pastor of New Direction Church in Indianapolis, stated that he had three traits that set him apart during his time on Earth.

First, King was a man of character, an honest individual who loved both his friends – and his enemies.

“He was an honest individual who was willing to speak truth to power,” Sullivan said. “He was same in public as he was in private. He was someone who as a friend to his friend, and he loved those who despised him. We should all strive to be people of character.”

Secondly, King was a man of conviction, who believed that every man, woman, and child, regardless of background or skin



Light of the World Christian Church Choir participated in the virtual celebration of the life of MLK.

color, should be treated as equals.

“He was someone who saw each and every individual, no matter their background, no matter their color, their creed, as individuals who were made in the image of God,” Sullivan said. “And he had convictions that all men and women should be treated equal, and that they were created equal.”

Finally, King was a man of courage. Despite hatred from all sides, and at the cost of his own life, King stood tall in his beliefs, fighting to create a nation that, as he said in his famous “I Have A Dream” speech, “will rise up and live out the true meaning of the creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”

“As we look back historically at how he marched and how he spoke truth to power, and how he was literally willing to put his neck on the line for other people and for what he believed, he had the courage of his convictions,” Sullivan

said. “He was willing to stand for truth and stand for righteousness.”

After a tumultuous year, which included worldwide protests against police brutality, a still ongoing, rampant pandemic, and an election that seemed to showcase further division within our nation, Sullivan encouraged the IWU community, and the world watching, now more than ever, to continue to work towards achieving the dream that King spoke of all those years ago, while at the same time, remembering the legacy that he left behind.

“I think that there are so many things that we can learn from King that will help guide us in this season and in this moment,” Sullivan said. “One of the things we can draw from him is to have that consistency to continue to fight for what we believe, speak truth to power, defend those who are helpless, to be a voice for those who have no voice, to stand for what’s right, to stand for justice and truth, and to stand for other people.”

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