Dhara Patel

Professor Dabek

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Coming Together During the Pandemic

In Jia Tolentino’s article titled “ What Mutual Aid Can Do During a Pandemic” she discusses the increased amount of aid being offered to Americans as the pandemic surges. The author explains to her reader how the pandemic has changed the way civilians provide aid to individuals in need. In addition, she gives examples of ways Americans have given assistance either through social distancing or remotely. Although the current Coronavirus pandemic has made millions lose their lives and jobs, people are still trying to support each other. In fact, more aid is being offered today to minority groups than previously. Even though the author may have divided readers in some places of her article, Tolentino creates a connection with her readers by demonstrating how Americans have provided mutual aid during the pandemic.

By providing many experiences from different individuals the author tries to connect with her readers. A variety of groups have stepped up during the pandemic to help those in need. Many of these recipients have come from smaller groups that were not provided large amounts of aid before. Tolentino states “ Relief funds were organized for movie theater employees, sex workers, and street vendors” (Tolentino). In other words, Tolentino believes that our society is working together more than before the crisis. Not only does she provide experiences from different types of organizations but also gives her personal experiences in providing assistance. Many times authors do not provide their own experiences, therefore, making themselves feel like an outsider. Just like many other good civilians, she signed up for a mutual aid network in her town to make payments to people in need. Also, she helped Liam Elkind, the founder of Invisible Hands, in buying groceries for an immunocompromised woman. The author’s experiences enrich the reader in the numerous ways mutual aid can be offered. Tolentino’s examples have made it easier to follow and comprehend by readers since she gives her and others personal experiences.

Tolentino manages to make a connection with her readers by using multiple techniques. The author did an excellent job of making everyone feel like a whole at the beginning of her writing. For example, her word choices are primarily first-person pronouns such as I, we, and us. Rather than separating herself from her readers, she is becoming a part of them. As she provided certain examples, I started to think about what my community has been doing to help others out. Reading through Tolentino’s article has made me relate to my personal experiences during this crisis. At my local temple in Springfield, I serve food to individuals who may or may not need aid. I agree with the author that the global pandemic has made everyone work together. Although it has changed our lifestyle, we can still say that the pandemic has given us positive outcomes. Currently, more organizations are focusing on providing a support system families can rely on. Readers can relate to this article in multiple ways since Tolentino connects with her readers on a more personal level.

American’s have changed dramatically during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The support for advocacy, community, and volunteerism has increased in the United States. People have started to realize the need to work together to prevent falling down. Tolentino insists “ physical connection could kill us, but civic connection is the only way to survive” (Tolentino). Covid-19 has changed the way people give or receive aid. Although the pandemic has caused us to be physically distanced from each other, there are many ways of providing or receiving aid. Instead of face-to-face help, citizens are now doing it remotely through many online resources. Zoom conferences and social media platforms are starting to become a major resource for people in need of help. Furthermore, the author states that there are more groups of people and organizations that have started to provide food, shelter, and money. Many individuals who are not financially stable, still try their best to support others. In the article, Maggie Connoly who lost her job still insists: “elderly neighbors to get in touch if they needed groceries and or other help” (Tolentino). There are similar people like Connoly who are giving up their own priorities for others. In short, the pandemic has made society evolve into a more supportive group for people in need.

In recent discussions of supplying mutual aid, a controversial issue has been whether the government should be the main support system. State and federal governments have denied providing aid to individuals in need. Therefore, citizens are trying their best to provide a support system to non-stable families. Although Tolentino does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that it is only the civilian’s responsibility to provide a helping hand. She believes that sorting out the conflict between the government and its citizens will take many years. Tolentino complicates matters further when she writes that “ the day-to-day practice of mutual aid is simpler” (Tolentino). This makes it seem like mutual aid is only the people’s responsibility instead of the government. At the beginning of her article, she made everyone feel like one but near the end, she divided some of us apart. Individuals who do not support Tolentino’s belief might argue that citizens are currently paying taxes to help people in need. Therefore, the government should also provide assistance to them. Although her writing connects to her readers in many ways, this conflict can influence the reader’s thoughts.

Altogether, the pandemic has made society realize we need to work together. Rather than choosing a group to provide service, we should all support individuals in need. The government and its citizens should come together and help those affected during the pandemic. Tolentino’s article provided readers with different types of ways to help out during this ongoing crisis. By providing personal and other individuals’ experiences it makes the reader connect to the article. Mutual aid has increased throughout the United States as we realize what a good citizen truly means.

Works Cited

Tolentino, Jia. “What Mutual Aid Can Do During A Pandemic” *The New Yorker.* 11 May 2020.

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