

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

One Day at a Time

(Original)

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Dear Anna,

It's good for me to sit down and take the time to write this to you since I know your world is in utter chaos at your point in time. You should know that it only gets better from where you are right now.

You're probably curious about how your dreams and aspirations have played out so far, and I think you'll be proud how far you've come. I'm currently working on my dissertation at MIT on efficiency of geothermal energy. We've finally started taking the steps towards using almost entirely renewable resources as a society. As of now, the world is using massive amounts of nuclear power in place of fossil fuels, although there are concerns of safety and more research being done on other sources. You'll be happy to know that vegetarianism has been more strictly enforced in many parts of the world after the Great Cattle Famine of 2025 and too many years of improper livestock care. But, pseudo-meats have become so close to the real thing that no one really minds, especially considering climate change is still one of the most widespread issues we face.

A few years ago, a professor at Stanford patented a virtual reality device called MeTech which now functions as the biggest social media platform, entertainment source, and method of connecting with those around you at a moment's notice. It gives everyone access to the internet through an implant, and with a bodysuit you can even explore virtual worlds. People obviously have had some big concerns with this, but the entire organization is non-profit, prides itself on ethics and morals, and is thankfully well-watched but not overly regulated. You're probably thinking that MeTech sounds like something out of a dystopia, but it's really no different than cellphones were--just more convenient. In fact, right now I'm composing this letter through my thoughts with the ThinkType application I have installed.

Now, schools have become revolutionized with students able to not only learn but immerse themselves in any subject they truly care about. Artificial Intelligence has been taking over the workforce, but education has also shifted into preparing students in the realms that AI can't replace. What was once a competition over standardized test scores has become lessons in morals, creative thought, and life skills. Soon there may be measures in place, at least in some countries, to pay everyone a base amount each week because of the declining demand for human labor. The hope is that by doing this, human innovation will skyrocket because of the increased leisure time and access to information coupled with our more enriching education.

We're living in a more progressive time than ever, although it's still not perfect. Police brutality protests that took place in the US around your time revealed a deep-set racism in many aspects of life, which the majority of society is still actively working to change to this day. The incarceration system was modified recently, and hundreds of thousands of new police officers were trained with revised, more peaceful methods. There have been many minority, women, and LGBTQ+ leaders elected throughout the world in the past decade pioneering a new future and showing that maybe we're finally ready to take steps for the better.

COVID-19 was a difficult time to get through, but its impacts caused drastic worldwide improvements in healthcare, pandemic preparation, and epidemiology. We haven't faced a pandemic since then, but we're certainly well prepared for the worst case scenario. After the 2020 pandemic, the world became more unified, because it had to. We've moved beyond individualistic comparisons and competitions into a collectivist, almost utopian, state. I know we could face issues in the future, but right now, society as a whole seems empathetic, understanding, and—dare I say perfect?

Remember to floss, feed your cats, and take it one day at a time. The world will have its ups and downs and you can't do anything about that, but you are the one who makes your own choices. You can shrivel in cowardice and defeat, or stay brave as you face what comes.

See you (me?) in 10 years,
A more educated you