

By Aisha



In my honest opinion, the COVID-19 and the Lockdown have presented huge challenges for me. My day-to-day life and activities have transformed overnight to new normality and this means more pressure on me as a single mother of two boys. Like every other parent, I had to rapidly adjust to a new life: with school closures, parents furloughed or working from home, and support from outside the home no longer available. I am with my newborn baby boy and my 12 years old son at home. My younger child requires more nurturing childcare, such as washing, feeding, and cuddling. Under the lockdown conditions in the UK, I am not able to take my children out to play with other families. I get stressed because our social life has been suspended and we don't know how long this is going to last. As a parent I have devoted my time to my children, I help my son with homework and homeschooling, and by the time I am finished, it's already midnight. The fact is the situation may continue for an unknown time. Each time we get closer to containing the virus, a new variant arrives and people start to panic. I am craving to

Ito have some me time and to be able to read and write. In the past, I used to read a lot. Books are my best companions. Reading helps me to grow and cultivate new thoughts. Cultivating new thoughts in different spheres is very important for one's growth. I was struggling with big words when I started, but my elder brother and mother were always helping me to read the difficult words. When this journey of reading started, I read a story which ended very well, so I taught all books were like that. I was very sad when I read "The Drummer Boy" written by Cyprian Ekwensi. In this book, a blind Drummer boy and singer named Akim moved from place to place entertaining people with his performance. But deep down his heart, there was undisclosed unhappiness which made his whole life disturbing and he found it very hard to trust a friend.

Reading takes me to places near and far- for example, just by reading books from different authors, I know about other places that I have not visited, that it feels like I have traveled to those particular places. Reading makes me laugh and cry in the same spirit - accept joy and sorrow the same way. It makes me laugh during joyous times and it helps me to cry out my sorrows during unhappy times. Reading lets me fly without wings Reading has improved my English proficiency, it gives me an unlimited imagination, so I can apply in normal life situation.

learn the different cultures and customs of other countries in the world too. Reading can make me relaxed and calm. I wish people could spend more time reading. As humans, we have the potential to overcome challenges together, managing our stresses and building a strong and powerful society.

I wrote this poem during the lockdown and dedicated it to RAPAR for their continued support

FRIENDSHIP

When the wind is turbulence and the weather is stormy

And the road so rough during a pandemic

I am so lucky to have found a family

A family that looked at me with a fair lens

And not judging me

You came into my life when there was no one else

In you, I found solace Even though there are challenges

I always see your helping hand coming towards me

When I am in dire, are the best and most beautiful family

One I could never have

I know you will always be there for me

So thank you!