

Resilience. A word that means facing challenges and obstacles head-on. A word that encompasses what the 7.9 billion people in the world are demonstrating through a global pandemic and the fight to end racial injustice.

We turn on the television and we see war. COVID-19 rates. Mask mandates. Racial injustice in Kyiv where people of color are being prevented from leaving. It has become seemingly impossible to find joy and positivity when so much negativity has trapped our world. It feels selfish to think about our own joy when countries are at war. People are dying, Families are being broken.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has claimed the life of 6.06 million people, possibly more. It is 2022 and people are still fighting for their lives. Not just because of the pandemic, but because of discrimination. George Floyd and Breonna Taylor brought these numbers back to light after their tragic deaths. It's astonishing to see that it took the death of two people to remember that this is a prominent issue. An issue that needs to be resolved.

As the daughter of immigrant parents, I worry. They sacrificed their lives and left their family to ensure that their children could have more opportunities. It is when I turn to them that I find my pockets of joy. It is seeing the smile on my mother's face when I tell her that I am being recognized for my work at school that brings me joy. It is seeing the look on my father's face as I rehearse my speeches that bring me joy. It's the realization that I am so incredibly fortunate to still have those faces to comfort, support, and accept me for who I am when so many others around the world no longer do.

You would think that after 17 years of living with them, I would be immune to those eyes, but I'm not. Truth be told, even when I want to be mad, all it takes is one look and all I feel is joy. They are the reason I find motivation in all the disorder in the world, in all the chaos and confusion, in these moments of despair. I always say this, and I'll never stop, I am so lucky to have the bond I do with my parents. I owe it all to them.