

# Not Only Grief!

Valeria Randis

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Learn the word “indifferent” and the phrase “you matter.” Try using them in several sentences.

The pandemic has caused deep changes. It has caused a lot of grief, but not only grief. It has also made people less *indifferent* to each other. We feel closer and more understanding of one another.

Communities have taken big steps to protect each other. We may be in isolation, but we have found ways to connect. People in Italy go out on their balconies to see each other and sing together or play music. Before the pandemic, these same people probably didn’t even say “good morning” if they met in the streets.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I was worried about losing the relationships I had with my classmates and my teacher. Going to school was essential to me when I moved to the United States a year ago. My classroom was the first place where I could express myself and feel comfortable, even if my language was not perfect. I thought that with this pandemic, I would lose that, but I was wrong. My teacher tried in every way to stay connected with us, though it was not easy to have the class online. I discovered that I felt closer to my classmates even if we were not in the same room because we were in the same situation, and we all cared about each other.

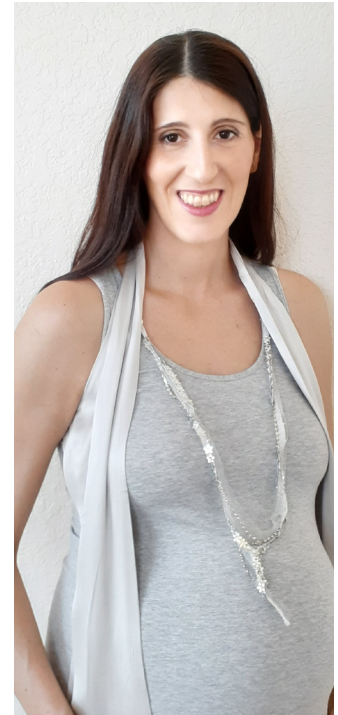
Now, I am eight months pregnant and locked in my house because it is too dangerous for me to go outside. However, I know that every day, I can

see the beautiful smiles of my teacher and of my classmates, and that makes me feel better and less isolated.

The pandemic forces us to have different priorities. We take the time to check on each other now, and to do something good for our family and our community. We look in the mirror and we see a “new” us—less selfish, more vulnerable, and more open to others.

Yesterday evening, I listened to a song that perfectly expresses this difficult time in our life. It was written by Alicia Keys, who wrote it for essential workers. The title is “Good Job.” The chorus says:

“You’re doing a good job  
Don’t get too down  
The world needs you now  
Know that you matter  
Matter matter.”



*Valeria Randis is originally from Italy. She lives with her husband and her 14-year-old son, and she has a baby on the way. She has a master’s degree and a doctorate in Law. She attends ESOL class at the Atlantic Technical College in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. She loves reading, going to the beach, and learning new things.*

## “Good Job”

Watch a video of essential workers doing their jobs while Alicia Keys sings their praise.



### AFTER YOU READ:

1. According to the author, what matters during a pandemic?
2. Watch the music video. Why did Alicia Keys write this song? Read about essential workers on pp. 50-59 of this issue.