

# Clean Start

## She Lost her Job, So She Started a Cleaning Business

Zulma Y. Lizarazo

### BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Do you know anyone who lost their job during the pandemic, and so they started their own business? If so, what happened?
2. Have you ever run your own business? If so, what did you like and dislike about it?

### Landing on My Feet

I lost my restaurant job in March 2020. For six months, we only had one income – my husband Edwin’s job at the restaurant. We had a lot of bills to pay, so we struggled. But I always land on my feet. I trust God, and I always find a way.

I was desperate to earn money, so I decided to try something completely different. I started cleaning houses.

### I got on my cell phone and texted everyone on my contact list.

I got on my cell phone and texted everyone on my contact list. I told them about my plan to create a house cleaning business. At first, I was disappointed because people replied and said, “No, thank you. I don’t want anyone coming into my house.”



I didn’t give up. I started networking with my friends, Jenny and Hannah. They both have cleaning services. They told me that if they had too many customers, they would refer clients to me. It has been a blessing that



*Zulma and her husband both wrote about their work experiences during Covid. Read his article, “Worrying Doesn’t Help,” p. 27 of [Issue #54](#).*

Jenny and Hannah gave my phone number to their customers.

One day I was working in my yard, and I received a text from a friend who was looking for a cleaning lady. I was so excited! My plan was working!

### The Good

Like every job, house cleaning can be both good and bad. On the one hand, there is the nice 80-year-old lady who knew me from my old job. She was okay with me entering her house to clean, and she was not too scared. The first time I went, I was very nervous. The news said that you can have Covid-19 but no symptoms.

### The first time I went, I was very nervous.

What if I brought Covid into her house? To protect her, I always wear my mask and gloves, and I keep six feet away from her. I want to protect her from getting sick. When I leave, she always says, "Thanks so much, dear. The house looks so nice."

### And the Bad

On the other hand, there are the two micromanaging ladies. It is very stressful to clean their homes because they are watching me the whole time. They say things like, "You missed a spot"; or "Make sure you clean under the sink." I need the money, so I put up with them. I have three beautiful young kids who need to eat.

I am grateful for this work because I feel like I am helping people. For example, last Sunday a lady called me because she broke her hip and she cannot clean. I went over to her house to check things out. The lady was so nice to me, but she was concerned that I didn't have the Covid vac-

### I was thinking about my mother, who is also sick.

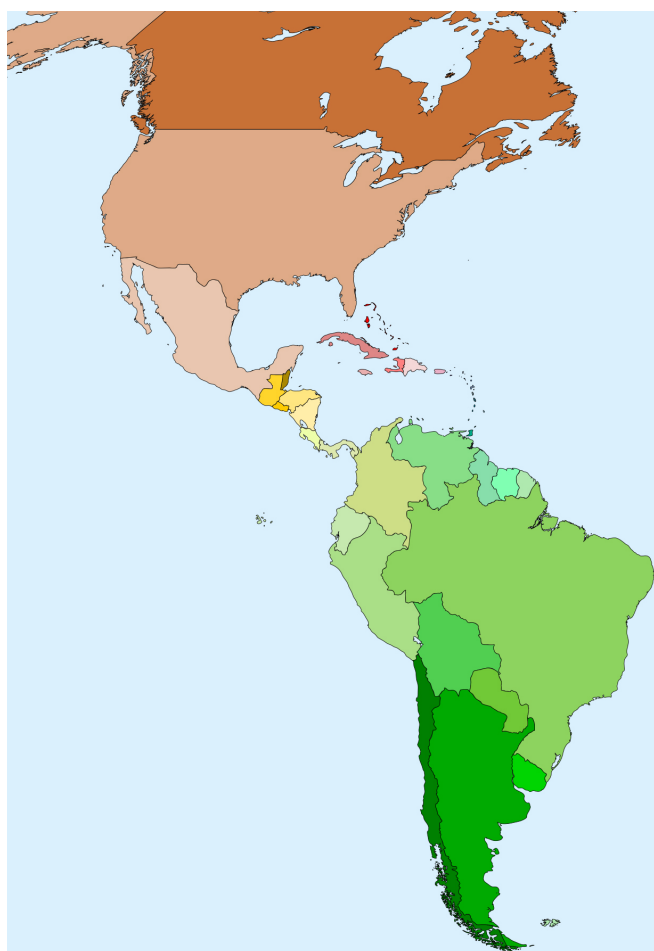
cine yet. When I left her place, I went to my car, and I felt very emotional. I cried because she is an older woman and she

doesn't have her kids around to help her. I was thinking about my mother, who is also sick. I cannot go and visit her because she lives in Colombia. So I feel blessed that I can help others during this pandemic even though I lost my job and I was hopeless too.

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#### AFTER YOU READ (THE ARTICLE, PP. 7-8):

1. In the first paragraph, the author says, "I always land on my feet." What does she mean by this metaphor?
2. According to the author, what are some of the good and bad things about her cleaning business?



*Zulma live in Maine, and her mother lives in Colombia. Find Maine and Colombia on this map and identify other locations you see here.*

3. Write a short paragraph about something in your life that has both good and bad sides. Incorporate the phrases, "On the one hand..." and "On the other hand..."

#### AFTER YOU READ (INTERVIEW, P. 9):

1. According to the author, why has she decided to charge by the hour instead of by the job?
2. What do you think Zulma means when she says, "You have to calculate that you will charge 'x' more on top of the base price"? (What does "x" mean in this context?)
3. How would you decide what to charge for your services if you were in Zulma's place? Why? Use the sample schedule on p. 10 to learn more.