

## My Quarantine Journal

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July 14, 2020 – August 7, 2020

### Preface

Overall, I'm very excited to be starting this journal. Since the CoViD 19 pandemic became prevalent this past March I haven't left my house much, and as a result the activities I've done to keep myself busy have become very monotonous. I live in a suburb just outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota where coronavirus cases are the highest in the state. Before quarantine started, I was taking dual enrollment classes online. As a result of that I didn't go many places during the day anyway. The highlight of my weeks before quarantine was volunteering as a tutor at my high school for underclassmen. Over the past 5 months (wow, I can't believe that it's been that long), I've been extremely cautious about being exposed. You see, I may be extra at-risk for contracting the virus because I have a physical disability. My disability – called cerebral palsy – makes my body move constantly, essentially putting it into overdrive all of the time. As an added bonus I also have decreased lung function, which is definitely not ideal when there is a respiratory illness taking over the nation – and the world.

### July 14, 2020

Today I definitely went outside of my comfort zone. I went to the hospital for a necessary procedure. Every four months or so (for the past 10 years) I have received this treatment in order to maintain my ability to walk and function in general. This typically routine procedure felt anything but safe and familiar today. The hospital is certainly the last place that I want to be at this point. Though my hospital is not treating coronavirus patients and is taking the necessary precautions to prevent anyone from being exposed to the virus, I still felt uncomfortable. The realist in me knows that the number of people coming in and out of the hospital from many different places makes the probability of exposure very high. When I came home, I washed my hands thoroughly before miserably collapsing into bed. The procedure was rough today, but I know that I will recover over the next few days as I always do. As I will not be back home until winter break starts (ironically on my birthday), my next appointment will be scheduled for early December. I can't help but wonder how much the world will have changed by then, though I will not be surprised if things are a bit worse. Will I still want to go in for my necessary procedure? Only time will tell.

### July 15, 2020

I spent most of the day today recovering from my procedure. I have been feeling a bit ill, but I am fairly certain that it is just from complications with the procedure. It's so crazy that now even the hint of feeling different or sick makes everyone nervous. I wonder if there will be a time again when people can cough or sneeze in public without facing glaring stares or disapproving looks. At this point, it feels like life may never go back to being "normal", at least not the way normal felt before the pandemic. I haven't been to a grocery store since early March, but from what my friends and family members have said I can gather that the environment is completely different. I'm glad that stores and public establishments are responding in ways that will hopefully prevent any spreading and I hope that everyone complies with all of the guidelines that are set in place. I think the craziest thing about this virus is that it only takes one person's mistake or careless actions to expose potentially dozens of people to the illness. At this point, it continues to baffle me that there are groups of people who refuse to wear masks, making the pandemic a political issue. In my opinion, if wearing a mask even has a chance of preventing the spread of coronavirus it is definitely worth the effort to wear a mask and take recommended safety precautions.

July 17, 2020

I have not done much over these past couple of days. Today I texted my brother to see if there will be an opportunity to meet my niece (who was born in April) before I leave for school in Montana. It looks like we are going to plan some kind of outdoor meet-up, which I am very excited for. This got me thinking about how Hazel (my niece) will never have experienced life before the coronavirus. I don't know how much will change as a result of recent events, but I am sure that life will change on some level. As of right now, everything is so uncertain. I believe that as people become accustomed to working remotely and attending school virtually, our entire cultural dynamic may change. A year ago, I couldn't have imagined not attending school and being in close proximity to my peers all day. Now I have in many ways adjusted to attending school virtually and meeting with people through the phone. Though I know that humans are very social creatures, I wonder if we will adapt to being social while remaining in isolation. Personally, some of my fondest memories of growing up consist of playing with my friends or going to events (such as the state fair) where thousands of people gather to enjoy entertainment together. I wonder if Hazel will ever experience this, or if her fondest memories will be made through a screen.

July 18, 2020

This whole event has given me a new respect for the environment that I live in. Sure, I've noticed the things that surround me, but this experience given me a chance to absorb those

things even more. For example, today I sat outside reading a book on my front deck. In the past 10 years that I have lived here with my family, I don't think I've spent more than an hour at a time sitting outside like I did today. If I weren't putting a bit of extra effort into staying at home, I may have spent the day out with friends or simply inside watching Netflix. I'm not sure if my attitude is the result of quarantine or just the fact that I will be leaving for college in a few weeks, but either way I've found myself becoming more centered and appreciative of living in the moment. As I drown myself in reading and homework assignments, I remember to look up once in awhile; not just to observe my surroundings, but to appreciate the point in time in which I am living. In a way "appreciate" sounds like the wrong word choice as this is likely the toughest thing that my generation will endure. I can't help but think that once the coronavirus has been controlled, future generations may look back in awe, wondering how we all persisted.

July 19, 2020

I haven't written about this much, but the procedure that I had a week ago temporarily limits the function of my hand and legs. As you can probably imagine, this makes everyday tasks such as typing very difficult. As a result of my disability I typically rely on friends and family members to help me with daily tasks that are too difficult for me to do independently. With the transition from living at home to moving to Montana soon, I have been doing my best to become as independent as possible but lately my recovery has made this difficult. With that said, accepting help from others right now is a bit of a risky move. I have no idea if any of my family members have encountered people carrying the coronavirus on their trips to the grocery store. Being in such close proximity to people who may have unknowingly been exposed makes me nervous, because I know that the virus could potentially kill me. At the same time, I choose not to focus on this hypothetical because otherwise I would spend all of my time worrying. I try to encourage my parents to use ample hand sanitizer any time they go into an environment with others but I know that if they touch their faces or forget to sanitize my efforts are pointless. At this point I am just hoping for the best.

July 20, 2020

Today I realized how disconnected I could be from all of this. My mom was talking about a client that she met with over the phone today who hasn't watched the news in weeks. This client has chosen to take isolation to a completely new level. Of course, she leaves her house to buy groceries and purchase the necessities but other than that she has embraced life in isolation. From what I could gather, it sounds as if she has spent most of the past few weeks lounging outside reading or working in her garden. She spends evenings completing puzzles or watching movies. I envy people like her who can enjoy quarantine without a care in the world. I wish I could safely buy enough groceries to stay inside for weeks at a time just embracing the break from the real world. If I'm being honest, lately I've been drowning myself with reading

books in preparation for my classes in the fall. I think reading these books offers a great break from the realities of quarantine. I am very anxious about Montana State's plans to open for in-person classes in the fall. I would love to move into my dorm as planned and be in a new environment, but at the same time I wonder if I will be safe in a community where students will gather from all over the U.S.

July 21, 2020

I've realized that this journal has become more of a compilation of my random thoughts as I progress through my entries, but I think that maybe it's okay. Like I've written before, I haven't really left the house since quarantine started. This has given me quite a bit of time alone with my own thoughts. I've started packing and purchasing things for my dorm room, which I move into in just a few weeks. In a way, this whole transition seems surreal. Not experiencing an orientation on MSU's campus in June means that I have only visited my future home twice, and have only really seen it on the surface level. Of course I am excited to be moving to Bozeman, yet I am concerned that once I arrive it will be too unfamiliar. I look forward to getting situated in my dorm and meeting some of my neighbors, but I know that I will have to be cautious and keep my circles small. Making new friends may present a whole new challenge, as I am not a very outgoing person even when the world is not experiencing a pandemic. I am excited and nervous to see what my first semester of college is like. I know that everyone will be required to wear masks and be mindful of preventing a potential spread, but I can't help but wonder if it will be enough.

July 23, 2020

Today I went out to lunch with a friend. She and I have never been super close but her twin sister, my best friend, left about a month ago for the Air Force Academy, so I think we were both looking for somebody to spend time with. We talked about everything from college preparations and the coronavirus to boys (of course). She will be staying in Minnesota for college, attending a school with only a few thousand students. It's crazy to me that she will be attend a school with about as many students as there were at our high school. Her school is opening on a schedule much like Montana State's, with classes starting earlier in August and winter break starting after Thanksgiving. She has the same thoughts as I do about how it may be unlikely for colleges to bring students back to campus in January. We both talked about how concerned we are that there will be outbreaks as soon as people start mingling on campus. We also talked about how strange it must be for college sophomores, who had just gotten a taste or independence and freedom when everything changed. As incoming freshman, we have not experienced the college life yet, so we probably won't be as frustrated by rules and other guidelines that our schools put in place. We agreed that life on campus will definitely be different, but we are both excited for the change.

July 24, 2020

The other day, a friend of mine brought up a very interesting perspective on masks. To paraphrase her ideas, if the general population were told that masks would actually protect them from the virus, rather than protecting others from the person wearing the mask, people may be more willing to wear masks. In society today, people are more concerned about keeping themselves safe rather than protecting others. Maybe humans have always been selfish like this, but in my opinion the COVID-19 pandemic has brought it to the forefront of societal concerns. My grandparents have always been avid supporters of the Republican Party, and lately that party has become aligned with the anti-mask movement (if it can be called a movement). Since the start of the pandemic, I have spend hours on end trying to convince my grandparents that wearing a mask in public is very important. I wish I were able to tell them that they are protecting themselves by wearing masks on their weekly visits to the grocery store, but instead I try to convince them that they are protecting people like me who may have compromised immune systems but are forced to visit the grocery store for important supplies. Though I know that lying is never a good approach to convincing someone of one thing or another, stretching the truth in this case may be an effective warning.

July 25, 2020

Today I met my sweet baby niece for the first time. Hazel was born in mid April at the height of the craziness here in Minnesota. My brother and his girlfriend came to visit with my parents and I on our front porch where everyone (except for baby Hazel) wore masks. Everyone got a chance to hold her and enjoy the fun that comes with a new baby before it started to rain on us. I can't help but wonder what Hazel thinks about seeing her family in masks. My mom brought up the point that babies learn a lot from mimicking facial expressions, and we wondered together if Hazel will be impacted by not seeing many people's mouths and noses behind masks. I can't even begin to image how my brother and his girlfriend must feel about having a baby at such a crazy time, with everyone wanting to meet her but needing to be cautious about exposing her to anything. During the visit, Hazel kept staring at me with her big, curious eyes. My parents are convinced that she was staring at me because she likes me, but I'm pretty sure that she was just fascinated by my tie-dyed mask. I hope that someday soon I will be able to enjoy Hazel's company without wearing a funny looking mask, but we need to make sure that the world is safe for both her and I before that happens.

July 26, 2020

I convinced my mom that we needed to do something fun and different today, so we packed a picnic and headed to the Minnesota-Wisconsin border. We crossed the border and drove south for about 15 minutes until we found our destination; a waterfall. I was unsure of how crowded

the area would be on a Sunday but fortunately for us not many people are willing to make it down the 135 step staircase to the base of the falls. There were only a few people there when we arrived, so we took advantage of standing under the cool water. I snapped a few photos to admire later, and then we admired the waterfall from afar. It offered a much-needed break from being indoors for most of the past few days. After admiring the flowing water for probably an hour, we hiked back up the steps and had a picnic just a few yards away from the cascading water. I am very grateful for the days like this where I get to pass time with my mom, making memories that we can both hold onto when I move a thousand miles away. Before we went to the falls, we visited an obscure sculpture garden just off of the freeway. It was fun to admire strange creations that stood tall above our heads, taking our minds off of the rest of the world to wonder what the artists of these sculptures were thinking.

July 27, 2020

A few days ago, the governor of Minnesota (Tim Walz) issued a mask mandate for all indoor spaces. I was really happy to hear about this change because it will allow businesses to require customers to wear masks and create an overall more safe environment. Not everyone has the same opinions as me though. I was chatting with a friend who works at a cashier at a hardware store, and she said that a customer was so frustrated about the mandate that he yelled at her as she was bagging his purchases. I'm not sure what this customer thought he could accomplish by yelling at an 18 year old about a statewide mandate, but he definitely made a lasting impression. When I think about masks, the first thing that comes to mind is frustration. This frustration does not come from wearing a mask myself, but from the groups of people who refuse to wear masks either correctly or at all. I have witnessed so many people wearing masks on their chins or under their noses, which makes wearing a mask completely pointless. I wish people would understand how to wear masks correctly, because I'm worried that the spread will not stop if the general public doesn't understand how to actually prevent spreading.

July 28, 2020

Today I had to go outside of my comfort zone once again. In preparation for moving to Montana, I needed to buy some dorm necessities including sheets and light fixtures. These would be too difficult to buy online, so my mom and I went to Target. Walking through the store was an experience that I never thought I would have. I felt like the virus could be anywhere, so I was careful not to touch anything. Seeing everyone wearing masks made me feel like I was in a sci-fi movie. It felt nice (in a way) to do something somewhat normal. Shopping for supplies made me a bit more excited for the weeks to come, because the fact that I'm moving soon is beginning to feel more real. I'm excited to decorate my dorm, which I will be isolating myself in quite a bit during the school year. I want it to be a nice space where I can study and relax on my own. I have no idea what the next few months will bring, but I hope that I will remain healthy.

and safe while taking in a lot of information. I know that once I get to campus, I will take social distancing and other safety measures very seriously. I am not sure if the rest of my peers will feel the same way, but I am hopeful that we will have a safe and fun year on campus despite the changes.

July 29, 2020

Today, I went shopping online for hand sanitizer. I am hoping to find a large bottle to have in my room at college for when I come back from classes. I found a 20 ounce follow of sanitizer for \$112 on Amazon. It is insane how much prices have increased as the demand for sanitizer has risen. I am regretting donating all of my hand sanitizer to a shelter in need in early March. I think part of me thought the pandemic would not be a concern this far into the future. Obviously my prediction was way off, but I'm glad I could help other people in their time of need. I can't believe how difficult it is to find a bottle of name-brand hand sanitizer. With the amount of recalls on certain types of sanitizer, I am hesitant to buy any brand that I don't recognize. I never thought that I would spend this much time obsessing over hand sanitizer, but here I am! I wonder how long this will last and if hand sanitizer will ever go back to its deflated price again. After this is all over I wonder if anybody will wants to leave their houses without a bottle of sanitizer with them.

July 31, 2020

Today the summer class that I'm taking through Montana State University had a guest lecturer. John Doyle from the Little Bighorn Tribal College and a member of the Crow tribe gave a very impactful presentation. His presentation really struck me because he talked about how members of the tribe live in multi-generational households, making isolation impossible. He said that COVID 19 is greatly impacting the tribe, as they are forced to visit high-traffic areas to buy groceries and necessary supplies at reasonable prices. His visit really had an impact on how I view my privilege during this pandemic. Yes, I am at high risk for contracting the virus, but I am a white female who has a safe home to live and isolate myself in with my financially stable parents. I have spent a decent amount of time judging my peers who do not comply with mask mandates and other ways to protect others from the virus, but now I am even more motivated to advocate for protective measures. I wish everyone could hear from John about experiences on and off the reservation, as they might feel more responsible for personally preventing the spread of the virus. I hope that the Crow tribe will be able to preserve their culture despite losing so many members of the community. I think that this situation represents (on a smaller scale) what could happen to our country if the general population does not take the current virus seriously.

August 1, 2020

Today I spent most of my time packing for my move. It's crazy that I'll be leaving in less than a week, but I think I'm ready for what the universe might throw at me. Though I am still uneasy moving to a new state and being around so many new people who comes from all over, I'm confident in the university's ability to protect me and my peers (at least as best they can) from the virus by being strict about preventative measures. I think I'm going to miss my home in Minnesota, not just because my family is here but also the security of being isolated from the rest of the world. I've heard the some people moving to campus are barely bringing anything with the expectation The classes will be canceled. I hope that this isn't the case yet at the same time I value the health of the community more than my ability to have an on-campus experience. I am bringing quite a bit Oh my things to campus so I hope that I will at least have a little time to enjoy living in a dorm. There are so many questions being asked right now and nobody seems to have the answers. Right now, I think the only thing that anyone can do is go with the flow and follow any directions we are given.

August 2, 2020

Today, as part of my preparation for moving to Montana I went shopping for masks. I decided to visit the local mall to see what my preferred stores had to offer. Of course I was cautious while out in public. I wore a mask, practically bathed in hand sanitizer, and showered as soon as I got home. I decided that if I'm going to be wearing masks most of the time, I might as well invest in some durable and potentially fashionable ones. Unfortunately, most of the stores I visited were sold out of masks; I guess everyone else had the same idea as I did. I was able to find a few masks, which made me happy because I read the other day that it's best to wear a different clean mask every day. I wonder how the production and use of one-use masks is impacting the environment. I hope that this pandemic won't have a negative impact on our environment. I have already heard that the lack of air travel has significantly benefited our atmosphere, and I hope the world will continue to see those benefits even after the pandemic is no longer a concern.

August 3, 2020

Lately, I've felt a bit conflicted about spending time with my family before I leave. My grandparents live next door to me, so I usually see them pretty often. Since the pandemic started I have been more cautious about going to their house because I don't want to accidentally expose them to anything that I may have picked up. It scares me (and most people I know) that somebody can carry the coronavirus and be asymptomatic for up to two weeks. Of course I want to spend a bit of time with them before I move, but I have been very cautious about keeping my distance and being responsible. It is difficult beyond belief to refrain from hugging them when we talk about the fact that I'll be leaving in a few days, but I would never forgive myself if I somehow were to get either of them sick. Most of the people who have died

from coronavirus were elderly, and combining me (somebody with a compromised immune system) with two elderly grandparents definitely does not seem like a good idea. I hope that our whole family will be able to make it out of this pandemic safely, and I hope that my travels to Montana will not prevent that from happening. I've heard that people in Montana have been more hesitant to wear masks in public and practice social distancing, and I hope that I will be able to isolate myself to avoid potential exposure.

August 4, 2020

Today I spent the day packing. It feels so surreal to be leaving in just a few days. My family keeps asking how I'm feeling about moving away and going to college and honestly, I don't know how to respond. I feel prepared for my classes but pretty much nothing else. Part of me is looking forward to being on campus, but another part of me is conflicted about it all. I have been comparing my experiences getting ready to move to campus with those of some of my friends. One of my friends left for the Airforce Academy in late June and she has been in basic training up until next week. Another friend of mine is not starting classes until October. It is crazy to see the differences in college planning and how colleges are adapting to these new circumstances. One friend is going to have a traditional college dorm move-in and that seems so different from what I am expecting at MSU. I try to not watch the news. Everything seems to be so bad with so much confusion and disagreements about how and when to do things. Every state in the nation has its own situations and stories.

August 5, 2020

Today I presented to our class about this journal I have been writing. It was so interesting to see how this pandemic has affected people from different places across the US. It was thought-provoking to hear about how my peers are handling Covid. From Washington where the pandemic first started to spread in America, to small town Montana where the effects of Covid have not yet been experienced there is a strong consensus in my class that our generation must do everything we can to stop the spread. It has been especially impactful to hear how people's perspectives have changed as Covid has become a bigger concern. It is also encouraging to know that as I deal with uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, everyone else is dealing with uncertainty as well. I am glad that most of my peers are as concerned about complying with safety measures as I am. From what I heard in class today, it seems like all of my peers want to have classes on campus as long as they are safe. We are all putting a lot of trust into Montana State University and the safety precautions they have taken. So far, two of my classes for the fall will be completely online. I look forward to utilizing this safe learning environment. I think it is extremely likely that more of my classes will be switched to being online or at least a hybrid as the fall semester nears.

August 6, 2020

Well, today was my last day at home. Before I left, I wanted to visit a friend in northern Minnesota who just underwent a surgery to remove cancer. I know it may not have been the best idea to take a roadtrip on my last day at home, but I promised that I would visit him before I left. It has been crazy watching how different it is to for him to get necessary treatment right

now. He had to be tested for Covid before he went into surgery, which is completely understandable but just very different. Anyways, it was nice to visit with a friend amid the craziness that is my life. We talked about how life has been since the pandemic started and bonded over how strange our lives feel now. I couldn't imagine going through what he has been facing at any time, but especially during a time like this. We decided to watch the movie 2012 which (ironically) is about the world ending. We identified a number of parallels between the movie and life today. The protesters in the movie looked eerily similar to the ones we saw in Minneapolis a few months ago, and the earthquakes in California seem to happen pretty regularly these days. Though the world is definitely not ending, I think the world that we knew before Covid-19 will never truly be the same.

August 7, 2020

This is my last journal entry. I have no idea what this next month will bring. I am currently in Bozeman and to say it's beautiful would be a gross understatement. I am so glad that I've been able to come here despite the pandemic. Yes, I am a bit uneasy about what's to come but I am hopeful that everything will work out and I will continue to be healthy. I am very excited to be a part of the class of 2024 at MSU and I am excited to make my mark on Bozeman. Go cats go!