

Day 1 0 confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Monday March 9, 2020

Jessica picked up Rowan about 7am.

Today is Charles and my anniversary. Though I think of it early in the morning, I get distracted and we don't acknowledge the date until later.

Get dressed, head straight away to La Mantanita Co-op. I park in the front where parking spots are usually unavailable. There are only a couple of cars there. It's about 830am. I see one other customer in the store, an older woman. She may be a decade older than I am. I am hoping to add some things to the pantry so we feel ready to STOP going to the grocery, although I am thinking that walking up to the Co-op once in a while for fresh veggies will be something we will continue to do. I buy...

- a quart of peanut butter

- four bunches of kale that I will later blanch and freeze (the grocer gets some fresher looking bunches for me from the back of the store. The ones on display may be okay but they are beginning to yellow.)

- in bulk I buy coffee beans, multi-color popcorn, some blue cornmeal, and a few other things

At home, Charles decides to go with me to Sprouts Grocery. We don't want to get there when it is crowded. We have already decided to somewhat isolate ourselves from public contacts in order to prevent Coronavirus infection. Charles will be 73 in about a month, I am 66, and people who are older have had more dire outcomes from the virus than younger people. We've already stocked up on a number of items and our pantry and freezer are looking pretty good for a long haul (a number of weeks?). We buy things like...

- two dozen eggs, most to be scrambled and frozen for use in baking

- apple sauce

- more pasta

- two packages of raisins

- beets and sweet potato, cauliflower, bell pepper, baby bok choy, broccoli

- re-fill three-gallon filtered water containers, buy another one. Now we have four.

On the way home we decide to make one more "last trip" to Costco. There are a lot of people there but it is not overly crowded, at least not like the horror stories that we have started to hear about long lines and empty shelves. Most carts have toilet paper and bottled water, the cashier says that 90% of people are checking out with TP and bottled water. Not us, not this time. Charles bought a large pack of TP weeks ago and we don't use bottled water. We buy...

- a case of soy milk. That will give us three cases at home but we go through them fast. Soy milk is my "guarantee" of adequate calcium intake because of my osteoporosis. We use it in coffee and chai tea also, so use about a quart a day (or a bit more?) We will run out of this first. As I look back on it, I already wish we had bought more.

- and just a couple of other things to augment our pantry.

I made us some chai tea which we have in our Yeti travel mugs. It was TOO hot to drink at first. We still have it in the car. We FINALLY remember to say "Happy Anniversary!" And decide to head to the foothills to sit on a rock and enjoy our chai. We head to the mouth of Embudo Canyon where Indian School Boulevard runs smack dab into the Sandia Mountains.

Day 2 0 (+0) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Tuesday March 10, 2020

Charles and I are getting ready for our anniversary trip to Ojo Caliente. We leave tomorrow morning and will spend two nights with three days soaking in the mineral springs and hiking.

We plan to turn our phones off tomorrow morning and leave them off for the duration of our trip – a much needed break from news, politics and watching the march of the Coronavirus.

There are still no reported cases of Coronavirus in New Mexico but we know it is coming. It is all around us. We have decided that this is our last trip for the duration.

Day 3 3 (+3) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico

Wednesday March 11, 2020

The drive to Ojo is beautiful. We arrive at about 11am, check in and head for the springs. I'm a little surprised at how many people there are in the middle of the week. There is no problem keeping our distance, however. At the check in counter, the iPads are being wiped down with sanitizer after every use and there is a bottle of hand sanitizer we can use.

We soak, hike to the Posi ruins, and enjoy some gentle rain along the way. The hike back down the rock stair-case like trail to the resort is slippery and a bit treacherous because of the rain. We meet Mary Ann from Colorado who is also taking her time on the slippery trail. Above us we hear the unmistakable sound of Sandhill Cranes. Mary Ann, we and another small group just down the trail from us stop to listen and we crane our necks to find them in the unbelievably blue New Mexico sky. What a beautiful moment.

After the hike we soak some more and later enjoy delicious veggie fajitas before we go out in the dark to the springs again. In one of the springs, we visit with a couple of women who tell us that New Mexico has just reported its first three cases of Coronavirus— Taos, Bernalillo County and Socorro. They appear be travel related cases. The people infected had recently traveled to Egypt and New York. Well, so much for “escaping reality” for a bit. It finds you, like it or not.

The New Mexico Department of Health has prohibited gatherings in enclosed spaces of 100 people or more.

Day 4 5 (+2)

Thursday March 12, 2020

Complimentary coffee is served 6-8am so we walk down the hall from our room to the lovely bar with fireplace. A woman is sitting next to the fireplace and we join her with our coffees. She is Julia from New York, she moves to an adjoining chair and lets us sit on either side of the fire. The plaster is warm and smooth. It is cosy.

After a pleasant chat (she has a lot to say!) she excuses herself after the arrival of her friend who has a “very different world view” — to avoid possible contentious interaction I think. She tells us about a fascinating article in the New Yorker and promises to leave it for us to read. I'm not sure I will touch it, Julia is from New York, after all, where the virus is big news already. I cringe but I think my reasoning is, well, reasonable. I encourage Charles to use sanitizing wipes on the magazine before he reads it. He doesn't need encouraging, he's already thought of that. Later we will toss the magazine in the trash. I never pick it up except to toss it. I wash my hands.

A couple sitting at one of the high, bar area tables is jointly listening to news on a phone. It's a little annoying, frankly, in this venue that values relaxation and also “prohibits” cell phone use in all of its shared spaces. The man loudly declares, to all six or so of us present (including staff) that “Rome has shut down!” “Trump has declared a pandemic!” A man using his laptop on the couch across from us corrects him— “It's W.H.O., not Trump.” But it's true. The W.H.O. has, finally, declared the Coronavirus outbreak a pandemic. Loosely defined, a pandemic is the global spread of a new disease. As the couple continues to listen to their phone, I move to a window table in an adjacent dining room to avoid the background noise of it. A black cat joins me briefly at the window.

We enjoy getting out to the springs before day use begins. The sky is beautiful, as are the cliffs and hills above us. The sun comes up and we bathe in its first light and the soothing mineral waters.

Today we enjoy the hike along the bosque, then up through the washes, and into the hills before heading back for our second soak of the day. We are planning to continue to watch our distance from others and to continue our caution about touching shared surfaces and washing hands. Surprising to us is that there seem to be significantly fewer people here today than Wednesday. Was it the W.H.O. pandemic declaration last night or the rain this morning that decreased the numbers?

Charles talked to Aaron this morning and was appalled that Aaron, Sway and Logan are still planning to go on a trip to Texas that they had booked some time ago. The trip was for a soccer tournament that has been subsequently canceled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. They will be flying which means airports and a lot of potential exposure opportunities. Their trip starts tomorrow. I sent an article in the evening that I hoped would cause them pause. I also sent a message to Aaron saying that limiting possible exposure to the virus is “Not about you, or us. It’s about doing what we can to slow the spread of the virus. Barbara and Al and Charles and I, and others who may be at increased risk or who get severely ill whatever their age, may suffer if people fail to do what they can to cooperate with slowing this thing.” Aaron didn’t respond. The next morning, waking up and feeling like I may have said too much, I sent a note meant to soften my message Thursday evening, “...of course we care about if we get exposed as the virus moves through and we care about you guys. Be aware, have fun and stay safe (heart emoji)”

Back in our room in the evening, we turn the phone on and check the news. It reads like something out of a movie. Spain and France are the latest to institute dramatic steps to slow the spread of the virus— closing of bars and restaurants, prohibiting public gatherings and more. In Italy, hospitals continue to be overwhelmed. There is not enough staff, supplies and equipment. Ventilators are in short supply. People have and will die because of these things. That is why slowing the virus is so critical.

All New Mexico K-12 Public Schools will close as of tomorrow, for three weeks.

Day 5 9 (+4) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico Friday March 13, 2020

There have now been 10 Coronavirus cases reported in New Mexico, nine of them appear to be travel related.

We again enjoy coffee and the fireplace before heading out to our last morning soak in the mineral springs. It has rained hard most of the morning. We start off in the Soda Springs, which is covered and offers a dry spot to hang our towels. The rain slows and we spend the next over an hour in the Cliffside Pools, a mixture of arsenic and iron mineral waters.

Over a breakfast of organic eggs, hash browns, toast and jelly, we decide to go ahead and check out and head home. It is still raining when we leave.

As we drive we discuss, with Jessica on the phone, plans for if and how our routine for caring for Rowan might change. We decide that, especially since school is closed and she is not being potentially exposed to Coronavirus, we will keep our usual schedule for now. Drop off on Sunday afternoon, here Monday, where we will have the entire day with school closed, and Jessica to pick her up Tuesday morning on the way home from work. Jessica, for her part, will change into street clothes after her shift as a Respiratory Therapist at Kaseman Presbyterian Hospital Emergency Room, scrub to the elbows and monitor herself for fever, a predominate first symptom of Coronavirus.

Day 6 13 (+3) Saturday March 14, 2020

This morning, while Charles was looking up Coronavirus news, I was looking up how to reheat frozen donuts. 350 degree oven. Place donuts on cookie sheet and lightly cover with foil. Bake for about 10 minutes. Very tasty.

**Day 7 17 (+4) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Sunday March 15, 2020**

Jessica and Kris dropped off Rowan “as usual” this afternoon, only the dropping off part was the only usual thing about it. The drop off was outside, there were no hugs, except for Rowan’s. Jessica will not pick Rowan up for school tomorrow because school is canceled for at least three weeks. Jessica will pick Rowan up Tuesday but FIRST she will have changed clothes and scrubbed up to the elbows at work and she will drive home to shower and change again before driving back to get Rowan.

The base has closed to all non-essential personnel. Kris has been deemed essential personnel so he will continue to go to work.

Sue sent an email. The facility where she lives, the Aristocrat in Las Cruces, has halted all visits. Sue is getting ready to bust out her ukulele. That ought to liven things up. Sue says she’s a news junky and has MSNBC on her TV most of the day. All of her friends are self-isolating. and she is especially concerned about a recently widowed friend who feels the isolation acutely. I am so glad that Sue has close, meaningful interactions with friends through email and on the phone. Sue has been a fabulous role model in my life— over and over again.

The Albuquerque BioPark has completely shut down. Last week we got notice that the zoo would have all outdoor exhibits open. Things are changing fast.

Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church across the street from us has apparently canceled services. It didn’t feel like Sunday to have the parking lots and street up and down our block virtually empty of cars this morning. No clanging church bells, either.

New York City finally closed schools. Bars and restaurants in NYC are only allowed take-out and delivery service.

The CDC has asked for cancelation of any events with 50 or more people nationwide.

New Mexico Coronavirus cases are up to 13, ten of those cases are in Bernalillo County, our county. Oops, I just checked NM Coronavirus cases again this evening. We have 17 cases.

The Governor announced new restrictions on bars, breweries, and restaurants etc to begin tomorrow morning— 50% or less of capacity allowed, tables at least six feet apart. She is also asking that people stay home as much as possible and limit going out to essential outings only. I will be canceling my eye exam in the morning. Charles and I have been about a step ahead of the curve on things, so far, it seems.

I thought I was done for the night. Wouldn’t be reading anymore about what is happening around the world, country, and state. And then Jessica texted me to see if I could take a phone call... There are five rule-out COVID-19 cases in their ER at this moment. The question is, should Rowan stay with us and not go to her mom and Kris’s for now. Protect her from possible exposure to the virus and protect Charles and me, too. Even if Kris had been told to quit reporting to work and he were taking care of Rowan, he could be called up as a member of the National Guard to serve statewide needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. If that happened, Rowan would have no one to care for her and would need to come here. Jessica is concerned that she might bring the virus home to her family, concerned she might contract the disease herself. The thing is, you can’t know for sure when you might be infected. Charles and I can’t afford to take a chance at exposure with him almost 73 and me 66 years old.

Day 8 21(+4) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Monday March 16, 2020

This morning we needed to explain to Rowan that she would be staying with us, that her mom would not be picking her up as usual and that we didn't know how long this would last. We started by talking about the new cold (Jessica has been explaining it this way) that is going around, that her mom thinks she might accidentally bring it home from work. We talked about how important her mom's work is to people and how important it is for each of us to do what we can to make sure others don't get sick. We can actually save people's lives (her eyes got wide in amazement) by making sure we don't help spread the virus. That is why we won't be going to Taco Bell or the Aquarium or anything like that. She will be able to talk to her mom probably everyday and visit with her on FaceTime. We asked Rowan to make a list of things she wants from home (her mom's great idea) and let her know that Kris would drop her things off Wednesday on his way to work. We said it will be like a vacation with Gramma and Papa. She said "Where are we going?" We said, "Nowhere." We will be staying here but we will have fun. She was very excited that she will be able to bring her Tablet and other favorite things (including cookies and other favorite snacks). She doesn't understand that this will be more than a few days. She asked us and her mom, several times, how long would she stay here and none of us has a good answer for her.

We hiked all the way to Clark's Pet Store. I had called ahead and they had a bag of rabbit pellets ready for us at the counter. Rowan stayed outside with Charles. I went in, paid for the pellets, and was out in a couple of minutes. Rowan walked several miles. We were proud of her. Oh, and her reading skills are growing by leaps and bounds! Great opportunities to sit out on the porch and read together.

Day 9 23 (+2) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Tuesday March 17, 2020

This is all so surreal. Never have I imagined any of this. My life, Charles and my life, has been so COMFORTABLE and stable. We have been appreciative and grateful, certainly, but I really didn't think we would ever be in the position of questioning our financial stability. It all remains to be seen. So many people, those who are used to struggling and those, like me, who haven't struggled in a long while, are being yanked out of whatever illusion of stability that they thought they had. Jobs and livelihoods are going up in smoke.

One of the concerns amid the COVID-19 Pandemic is for those who are detained and incarcerated. I share that concern. Joe was picked up yesterday. He is sitting in Sandoval County Jail. This could take a while. Which is more dangerous? The streets? Incarceration? There are no answers except, "It depends..."

I know what we are doing in taking Rowan full-time and I know why we are doing it but, when it comes to living it, I am a little slow on the uptake. I almost forget to plan something for dinner that Rowan will actually eat. She is staying with us indefinitely to protect her from possible exposure to the novel Coronavirus. If Jessica were to bring the virus home from work, Charles and my life could be at risk through Rowan. It's all or nothing. And then there were three.

Day 10 28 (+5) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Wednesday March 18, 2020

Jessica and Kris came in the night, well after Rowan was asleep. They texted me that they were on the way, made the drop off in silence, and texted me that the drop off had been made.

How do you prepare yourself to leave your daughter for an unknown and indefinite period of time? What do you do to stay connected and reassure a 6-year-old that you aren't abandoning her? How many times do you have to remind yourself of the "why" of it, to keep yourself committed to the separation?

The drop off included groceries and pantry supplies, kid toiletries, and, most importantly, the items Rowan had requested in a list she wrote herself. Money for the Tooth Fairy was in there, too. Just in case. Oh, and a special letter from mom...

"Dear Rowan,

I want you to always remember how much I love you. I look forward to hearing about the fun times you will have with Gramma and Papa. I will talk to you every day that I am not at work.

Please have a fun time! This is a little adventure for all of us! Kris and I will miss you and you will probably miss us sometimes and that is okay... When that happens, all you have to do is call us!

You are my most favorite person in the world and I am always so proud of you!

Love and hugs and kisses,
Mom

One more thing... If you lose another tooth, make sure you save it for the Tooth Fairy!

We are flying by the seat of our pants here. Finding our way in our new world. Oddly, it feels quieter. My focus has narrowed. I think about dinner, about snacks and what to do about lunch, remembering that we need to have lunch at all. I am reminded of, no, I feel, twenty-seven years ago when Zalika was two and Joe was four and a half. The accumulation of toys and messes on the kitchen counter, breaks to read stories or to listen or go look at every kind of wondrous or calamitous thing. The inefficiency of the day and the focus on what is here, right now.

I am taking and making more than a usual number of calls with my daughter, Zalika, in Houston. We are erasing the miles between us over phone calls and shared anxiety. Charles asks me what I will do if Zalika gets sick. I say that I will talk to her even more often. He pauses and I know that he is asking me what I would do if she got REALLY sick. I tell him that I don't think about THAT, I can't. I have no idea what I could or would do. I can't afford to think like that. To pre-live the possible horrible outcomes is just more than I can bear. Already, feelings of stress come over me unbidden and unwelcome— a twitch in my left eyelid, my head being pumped up with dread.

**Day 11 35 (+7) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Thursday March 19, 2020**

It's everywhere. How we interact and do business has been turned on its head.

Schools are closed but the school district is packing a breakfast/lunch to-go bag for kids 18 and younger. We picked up Rowan's on our way to American Escrow to sign a document. You don't go into the school building at all. Drive or walk up. A gloved cafeteria worker walks the bag out and hands it through the car window. With a smile.

The digital, traffic-alert message board as we approached the freeway overpass had a different kind of message today— "COVID-19: Stay Home, Avoid Groups, Disinfect to Protect, Wash hands"

At American Escrow, we had been advised to email pictures of our IDs to them and to bring our own pens. The sign on the door asked people to stay back six feet. No clients are being allowed into the office. Cash payments are suspended and checks and receipts are being passed between the closed doors. The document we were to sign was placed inside a folder and passed to us. We signed the document on the hood of our car and passed it back through the doors.

Businesses are being creative. Flying Star, one of our standby restaurants in the neighborhood emailed a 25% off coupon— delivery or pickup. We will definitely take them upon on the offer. Mac 'n Cheese for Rowan, Buddha Bowl for us! Sometime this week or next, we also plan to drive through at Dion's Pizza for a bottle of their incomparable ranch dressing and a pizza to-go. B.C. (Before COVID-19) we ate out often. Now, not at all. Until tomorrow. Perhaps. For delivery or pick up options, only.

The NM Department of Health has issued new orders. No gatherings of more than 10 people. Bars, restaurants, breweries and the like are closed for dine-in; delivery and pick up are allowed. Gyms, indoor malls; closed. Theaters; closed.

Tonight, I attended my first Zoom meeting of the COVID-19 experience. I thought I hated virtual meetings but, to my surprise, it wasn't so bad. Maybe I will get used to this, after all.

So much has changed and there is no way to know what else, large or small, will change and how. Making two pots of coffee in one day? Berries and bananas in our smoothies? Fresh veggies? Refilling our filtered water bottles? Will they send kids back to school? Will we home-school Rowan if we don't have confidence that going back to school is safe for her or us? What about our energy and enthusiasm for doing this (whatever it is)? How about our good will and patience with each other? Will we continue to see this as an adventure and challenge that we can manage? Will having our granddaughter make it easier for us to remain positive, because that is the only strategy that makes sense, that keeps a 6-year-old happy and healthy? What are we doing now, that we take for granted. that will be different in a week or a month or next year?

Day 12 43 (+8) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico Friday March 20, 2020

1,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States last Friday. 17,000 confirmed cases today, according to the New York Times. In Italy, they are deciding who gets full care (think ventilators) and who dies. In New York, plans are being made for how they will make those decisions as equipment and supplies run short.

Today begins the closure of restaurants, bars and other establishments in New Mexico— except for delivery and to-go orders. We ordered Dion's pizza tonight. Rowan and I picked it up at the drive-through window, never leaving the car. I paid with a bank card so as not to have to deal with handling any dollar bills or change that I might receive by using cash. We are on a "no cash" basis these days. I used a sanitizing wipe on my card when it was handed back to me. I wiped down the bottle of ranch dressing we had also ordered and my phone and the steering wheel while I was at it.

On the street today, while walking to pick up the school sack lunch, we saw more people than is usual on a walk like this on a Friday. People are home from work; working from home or laid off. They are walking their dogs, pushing their baby on a swing in the front yard, working on a computer on the front porch, doing yard work. When we pass each other on the sidewalk, someone steps off and we self-enforce the six-foot separation guideline. When we speak to a neighbor in the yard, we stay six feet apart. When Jessica and Kris dropped off pantry supplies, fresh fruit and vegetables tonight, we visited at a distance.

When we arrived at Ojo Caliente ten days ago to celebrate our anniversary, there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Mexico. COVID-19 was not yet declared a pandemic, the national state of emergency had not yet been declared and the State of New Mexico had not

yet declared a state of emergency. Now there are 43 cases of COVID-19 in New Mexico and Ojo Caliente is no longer open for business.

It looks to me like New York has done too little, too late to prevent the nightmare that seems to be overwhelming the city now. Have we, in New Mexico, done enough, early enough, to prevent what we see happening elsewhere or are we just days and weeks away from experiencing it ourselves?

**Day 13 57 (+14) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Saturday March 21, 2020**

As fast as this pandemic is growing in the United States (0 to almost 18,000 identified cases in two months), it feels like a slow-motion fall to me here in Albuquerque. Although the number of identified cases in NM has gone from 0 to 57 in ten days, we still seem to be doing okay. Alex and Jessica, son and daughter, both work in and with hospital emergency departments and their departments are not overwhelmed, yet(?). The thing that nags at me, though, is that we don't know if the social distancing measures, cancelations, and closures have come soon enough here in the Land of Enchantment. Are we dodging a bullet or are we walking into a firestorm?

When I say that we seem to be doing okay, I am only thinking about the spread of the virus and our ability to take care of people who are sick. The very real and present effects of the pandemic in my family are tangential to the pandemic itself. The most serious consequence for me personally, thus far, is not the near total isolation from face-to-face interactions with other people and the obliteration of our daily routines, it is the decision we made to take our granddaughter full-time; it is a decision my daughter felt she had to make to keep *her* daughter and us safe from the virus.

The decisions we have made, such as quitting public transportation and quitting making Costco trips, *before* they were imperative, have turned out to be good decisions. The more we see from other countries' experiences, the more we see that taking action before it seems absolutely necessary is crucial. But my daughter making the decision to send her daughter to live with us, the grandparents, is huge and we are all still grappling with it. Granted, it's only been a week but it's been a long week for all of us. Rowan seems to be handling it best. She asks questions, we answer. She moves on, as far as we can tell. Charles and I are pretty solid even though we have been jolted out of our comfort zones. Jessica, the mom, is struggling. She is in a position of least control and most potential regret. It may be a situation where doing the best you can feels like the worst thing you can do. But, when all hell breaks loose, you just have to make your decisions, live the life you've got and be the best you can be. We can't afford to wait until things are better to make a good life. We might not live that long. We make do, we celebrate the good, we thrive— anything less feels wrong.

**Day 14 65 (+8) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico
Sunday March 22, 2020**

Potatoes. My friend, Diana, in Los Lunas found no potatoes at her grocery store. Jessica and Kris, in trying to fill our shopping list requests, found no potatoes in Target or Costco here in Albuquerque. Selinda found a semi-truck of potatoes in Rio Rancho. Selinda and others are part of the New Mexico Mutual Aid effort. They have made contact with over a hundred NM families in the week since they launched and have made deliveries of groceries, diapers and other essential items. Somehow, they learned of the semi-truck of potatoes and headed to Rio Rancho. When the three non-mainstream looking Mutual Aid folks approached the American-flag-sporting potato truck they took a breath, not sure of how they would be received. What they found were white comrades in concern for their community. People who had seen a need,

headed up to potato country and loaded up. The non-mainstream and the mainstream found alignment in that concern and a moment of solidarity where none might have been expected. Solidarity in their values in a world where “politics” was, at least for the moment, irrelevant. When Selinda explained that they were gathering groceries and supplies for community folks in need, they were given a bonus of 40 pounds of potatoes on top of their 100 pound purchase. She will drop some potatoes on our porch tomorrow.

Charles and Rowan planted pansies today. Rowan amazed herself in her progress riding her balance bike; pure thrilling surprise when she lifted her feet and stayed upright for several seconds. I took time for a brisk walk by myself and enjoyed connecting by phone with a close friend.

It was a good day.

Day 15 83 (+18) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico Monday March 23, 2020

Reality might be beginning to set in for me. Today, the governor told all New Mexicans to stay home. If we go out, it should be only for essential things like grocery shopping, necessary medical appointments or to get fresh air and exercise while being sure to keep our distance from others. Allowable group sizes have been cut to just five. If there are six people in your family, too bad, you need to split up and not all go out together, not even to the park. It's all about risk and minimizing it. All non-essential businesses are ordered to close. This part of the order is clear as mud for me. Does it apply only to businesses that open their doors to the public? Can five or fewer people in an office still go to work if the business is deemed non-essential?

Jessica's emergency department is limiting them to *one* paper surgical mask each per shift. That just seems wrong. Running out of masks altogether would be worse.

Charles mentioned that it would be nice to have a couple days “off”. We could go on our long walks to our favorite restaurants or whatever else we wanted to do without thinking twice. Then it hits us. We could go on the walks but forget the coffee shops and restaurants. There is no normal to go back to now. No “break” we can take. Even if we didn't have a six-year-old in tow, we couldn't go back to our “normal” life, even for a day.

I don't know if it would be easier if we knew how long this epidemic would last and what the future holds or if not knowing is a blessing. I'm kind of afraid of what I might find out if I could see the future of this thing.

Day 16 100 (+17) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico Tuesday March 24, 2020

We had a firewood delivery scheduled for this morning. We received this email message instead, “Good morning, With the new mandates the governor imposed yesterday, I will not be able to deliver wood. I apologize for the inconvenience, but I risk getting a citation if I am attempting to work with out being deemed an essential business. If you are still needing wood after the “stay at home” mandate, I can schedule you delivery at that time. Once again I apologize for the cancelation.”

This morning, I also received this message, “Good morning. I have a question, due to what is going on are you still wanting payments every month?” Almost all of our income is from Real Estate Contracts (RECs). We are working to develop a plan to work with people whose income is interrupted by the epidemic and it's economic fallout; as ours, too, will surely be. It's trickle up economics.

Day 17 112 (+12) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico Wednesday March 25, 2020

From the New York Times today.

13 Deaths in a Day: An 'Apocalyptic' Coronavirus Surge at an N.Y.C. Hospital

Hospitals in the city are facing the kind of harrowing increases in cases that overwhelmed health care systems in China and Italy

The story that follows this headline is difficult to read. I am hoping against hope that this scenario doesn't play out elsewhere as well, especially not here. Not with two of my family members working in hospitals on the front lines, not with several of us in our family in higher risk groups. I hope there is something about New York, like their population density, that makes them uniquely susceptible to the nightmare they are living at this moment. I hope their nightmare ends soon. I feel safe in our isolation with our stocked pantry and state-wide stay-at-home mandates, but it's an uneasy sense of safety. Tenuous as the hold of dandelion flower seeds in the wind.

Day 18 136 (+24) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 1 death Thursday March 26, 2020

This Coronavirus made me eat boxed macaroni and cheese. I haven't had boxed macaroni and cheese in the house since I used to buy it for Zalika. She would make it for herself when she came home hungry after basketball practice. Jessica makes Mac and cheese for Rowan sometimes and the pantry and snack supplies she packed for us included several boxes along with Oreos and a bag of candy to augment the "real" food items. I will admit it tasted good even though it felt so wrong to eat it. I made up for it the best I could by generously heaping steamed broccoli onto my plate. Rowan devoured her Mac and cheese like it was the best treat ever.

I have compromised my food choices somewhat since Rowan began her Coronavirus stay with us ten days ago. We've even toasted marshmallows over a bed of glowing coals in the backyard and I enjoyed those, too. It's all Charles's fault...and the Coronavirus for turning our lives upside down.

Day 19 191 (+55) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 1 death Friday March 27, 2020

Each morning when I wake, I reach for my phone, check for messages, check email and check the New York Times for news about the COVID-19 pandemic. This morning, I took one look at my inbox and hit my own personal circuit breaker. I deleted email after unread email. I scanned NYTimes headlines and didn't read a single story. I was fed up, over fed with information and I shut it down.

I want to focus more on family, friends, and community. There is so much going on right now, right here. A friend was tested for COVID-19 and learned her husband was laid off work the same day. None of us knows how things will play out or what the time-line looks like. Rowan asked again when she can go home to her mom, when she can hug her mom. When told, again, that we don't know and that it will be after the virus is "over" her eyes widened and her jaw dropped. I think she is starting to understand that she won't go home soon. We got news this morning that school won't reopen this year. What's left of kindergarten will happen right here with us. When she returns to school in August, she'll be a first-grader. Keeping her happy and active is our main job.

Rowan and I drove to Zia Elementary School today to pick up her school sack lunch. We often walk with Rowan, lately with her riding her balance bike. We usually enjoy picnicking in the lap of a sycamore whose girth is so large it takes all three of us joining hands to reach

around it. I enjoy the image of elementary-school-age Ann and Charles helping to plant the spindly baby tree in an Arbor Day ceremony, Charles teasing his sister on some after school spring day like this one and she chasing him around this very tree. The news that school will not reopen again this year is so new that the sign in front of the school still says that school will resume on April 6. There is a packet of K-5 learning materials on a chair next to the lunch pick-up. My thoughts go to other families picking up lunches for their kids who don't have the space and the resources we have and I hope they will find a way to cope with it all, that this thing won't tear them apart. I wish them resilience and good health and freedom from the worry of eviction. I think of Rowan's many books here and at her mom's. She hasn't even looked at some of them yet. We, Rowan's mom and I, will go through and gather books to share.

On the way home, while waiting for the light to turn I hand some money to a thirty-something man with a "Hungry. Anything Helps" sign. Rowan is quiet for a few minutes and then she says, "Gramma, you know homeless people *can't* stay at home...When this virus is over, you should invite a homeless person to live in our house." From the compassionate heart of a six-year-old.

I didn't ignore my messages or news reports the entire day but I did take the time to be more present in my life with my family. As disrupted as our lives have become, we are the lucky ones. We've got everything we need here at home. And, we've got each other, if only by phone and FaceTime. That's enough for as long as it needs to be.

**Day 20 208 (+17) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 2 (+1) deaths
Saturday March 28, 2020**

David Brook's column in the New York Times today touched me. Here's a snippet...

"Viktor Frankl, writing from the madness of the Holocaust, reminded us that we don't get to choose our difficulties, but we do have the freedom to select our responses. Meaning, he argued, comes from three things: the work we offer in times of crisis, the love we give and our ability to display courage in the face of suffering. The menace may be subhuman or superhuman, but we all have the option of asserting our own dignity, even to the end.

I'd add one other source of meaning. It's the story we tell about this moment. It's the way we tie our moment of suffering to a larger narrative of redemption. It's the way we then go out and stubbornly live out that story. The plague today is an invisible monster, but it gives birth to a better world."

I don't usually tear up when I read news stories and essays but, lately, it happens more often. His wasn't a story about individual hardships or loss but it was a call to reflect on life at this tumultuous, uncertain moment in time, my response to it, and what meaning I make from it.

Last night I felt energized, focused, and strong. Today I felt ill at ease, discombobulated, and on the edge of grouchy off and on most of the day. I attribute my mercurial state not wholly to upheaval and uncertainty but to an existential crisis of sorts. I have all but cast aside the political and community activism that I have been growing into for the last three years while, the other hand, I can see by the emails I have been deleting lately that a large number of people seem to be doubling down. I see friends and activists in my own, closest circle stepping up big. I admire all of this but I find I don't aspire to it. I am maxed out without setting a proverbial foot out the door. The way I am engaging in the larger community is more distanced and not just physically. It is a check written, a phone call made to a friend, occasional words of encouragement and appreciation given. This doesn't fit my "idealized" version of myself who would be much more actively engaged. I do recognize that my "idealized self" includes a large

measure of who I think other people see as me. But, I feel compelled now to just be my actual and authentic self on a moment to moment basis, mostly because I don't have the physical or emotional capacity to do anything else.

My purpose for right now is to take care of what's right in front of me with as much grace and good will as I can muster, to be open to moments of connection and joy large and small, and to look for ways to serve others that fits me where I am. This, like the pandemic itself, is in a constant state of flux.

The university is shut down but it has become a haven in this "stay-at-home" ordered world we are living in now. When we moved here over a year and a half ago, just one block from UNM, we couldn't have imagined what a good move it was. We spend a lot of time these days wandering this "deserted" campus and, with Rowan perfecting her skills on her balance bike and banned from school and play dates, these are essential outings. Yet another way we are among the lucky ones.

Today, as Rowan glided down the long ramp from the SUB toward Zimmerman library, she was passed by a young woman on rollerblades. Her speed and grace, along with the fact that she was a KID, immediately drew Rowan into her thrall. Rowan, while doing her part to keep at least a six-foot distance from everyone who may have walked, biked or skated by, spent the next hour following and engaging with Jordan, an utterly charming and kind 13 going on 14-year-old young woman. Rowan's last opportunity to play with or interact in person with another kid of any age, for any length of time, was probably her (unbeknownst to her or any of us) last day of kindergarten on March 10th, almost three weeks ago. When it was time to leave, Rowan begged and cried to stay, she would have stayed forever if she could. We've got to find a way to get her some kid time.

Day 21 237 (+29) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 2 (+0) deaths
Sunday March 29, 2020

I have shared my diary with my daughter Jessica, Rowan's mom. Below is her middle of the night response to me after she read yesterday's entry.

Jessica: I'm up again. This time because my mind just won't let me sleep much these days. I find myself having nightmares that lead to spinning thoughts. Tonight it was fear of death for those I love. You, Charles, Kris... Rowan. Inconceivable thoughts that leave me in tears. I will likely face death in the coming months because of work and I can handle that. But if this thing steals people I love...

I'm sorry you've been thrust into this roll you didn't ask for or expect. If I'd kept Rowan and found other childcare you'd be in an opposite situation where you never saw her for months and months. It may be that that would have been a better choice for you guys, but the way we're doing it is almost certainly the better choice for her. I so appreciate how much you and Charles enrich her life with experiences and learning. It's honestly better than I'd be doing right now.

I can only imagine how much you miss your social activism, but you're still doing work for society. This distance-keeping is one of the hardest assignments you could get. But it's absolutely for the greater good. It WILL save lives. The sacrifices feel large, but if we're lucky none of us will make the ultimate sacrifice. We'll emerge from this bruised and broken but still standing.

I love you so much. Hang in there. Give yourself and those around you buckets of grace. Eat the Mac n cheese, drink the wine, cry when you need to, light a candle. Give the kiddo her

tablet and walk away for a bit! This is just going to get harder, I'm afraid. But we'll make it. Maybe not gracefully, but we'll make it.

Me: Just so you know, I am not missing the social activism, actually. It's not what I aspire to right now. What I would be able to do is not the work I would want to do. The work I would want to do, if I were younger, and if Charles was not also at heightened risk, would be to pack those care packages and deliver them to families and folks who can't get out and/or who lack the resources we have. It's hard for me to believe it, but Charles and I ARE, ourselves, those very people I would have been honored to serve. Sometimes our roles get switched and our world gets scrambled, this is one of those times. And, also for the record, I am glad Rowan is here. It is good for us, too. Would I want things back to normal? Of course. But life is any thing but normal now.

Thank you for your deep dive into your heart. I am sending much love and hope to you all the time. I don't picture you dying in this historic catastrophe. I do know you are at risk. I believe your fear, tempered by your skill and attention to detail, will be your saving grace. And, pragmatically, I am hoping against hope, that our state's response has been soon enough and aggressive enough to prevent the wave becoming a tsunami.

**Day 22 281 (+44) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 4 (+2) deaths
Monday March 30, 2020**

These last two days I feel myself settling into this new life. Rowan got a bath. We found a way to get her a play date. FaceTime, of course. Why I didn't think of that sooner, I have no idea. She had a great time showing her friend Hannah around the house and yard and talking about silly 6-year-old things. Hannah's mom and I will give the kids time on a regular basis for virtual play during the pandemic. I will also reach out to other friends for additional virtual play dates. What a crazy time.

When I look at the news (as I still do multiple times a day, despite my resolve to quit just a couple of mornings ago), all I read about is what's happening with COVID-19 around the country. It seems like a minute ago that all the COVID-19 stories, all the danger and trauma, were from some place else. We've only known about the virus since January. It blows my mind how quickly this thing has blown up on a global scale, how quickly it's gone from theoretical to real. On March 1st there were just 30 confirmed cases of COVID-19 *in the entire United States*, zero in New Mexico. New Mexico's first confirmed cases (3) were reported on March 11. Now there are close to 150,000 cases reported in the country and almost 300 in the state.

I was on a Zoom call this morning, listening to activists from around the country— San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and more. All were talking about efforts in their communities to get people out of jails and prisons, especially and urgently now, where when you are locked up, you are in a Petri dish with no way to protect yourself from this highly contagious and deadly viral threat. This novel Coronavirus that causes COVID-19, has already infiltrated jails and prisons across the country. We've seen how quickly it spreads, it won't take much time to go from threat to reality. And, there is no way to keep it out, short of making sure everyone and everything that comes into the jails is free of it. That is not happening. That will not happen.

Joe is in McKinley County Jail in Gallup right now. When we talked tonight we talked about staying safe and how federal guidelines for safety are absolutely impossible to follow in jail. Inmates are not provided even basic hygiene and cleaning supplies. Every few days they get a little plastic cup of body wash/shampoo. That's it. He's supposed to get a toothbrush but he's been there four days and hasn't seen one yet. None of the guys that came through booking with him have toothbrushes yet. I put money on his books and he was able to buy some soap and soups. Most of the commissary items were unavailable. He says he's going through the food fast. They are getting inadequate bagged meals three times a day because the kitchen

has a broken pipe or something. They are hungry in there. They are vulnerable, too. It's just a matter of time. Those guys need to get out of there. Joe needs to get out of there.

**Day 23 315 (+34) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 5 (+1) deaths
Tuesday March 31, 2020**

Charles set up a tent for Rowan in the backyard today. We got the swing in the sycamore tree all squared away. When Jessica and Kris made a grocery drop this evening, they also brought squirt guns and a fun run-in-the-sprinkler sprinkler. The weather is finally showing signs of warming up and we are gearing up for what looks to be a spring into summer of creative and fun isolation, we hope.

As much as we endeavor to make the best of it, the question that won't go away is still "When will this end?" The answer is still unknown, but there are indications that this will not be over soon. In fact, we don't even know what "over" might look like. With predictions that we may reach peak numbers of deaths in the US (eventually with 100,000 to 200,000 total deaths) sometime mid to late April, with a tapering off from there, there is also an additional unwelcome possibility of the virus bouncing back in the fall. Might "we", those who are at much greater apparent risk for more serious or deadly outcomes from a COVID-19 infection, continue our isolating social distancing until a vaccine is developed 12-18 months from now? Charles and I are extremely fortunate to have family who would shop for us and make sure we had what we needed. We should have resources enough, too, unlike many others like us who wouldn't be able to even consider riding it out until a vaccine is developed. The long haul, in this case, could be punishingly and excruciatingly long.

I am going to have to remind myself, over and over again, to take a breath, be in the moment, and don't let my life today get lost in my concern for the future. Everything right here, right now, in my bubble of life is pretty fabulous. I will enjoy it and, when it changes, I will figure it out.

**Day 24 363 (+48) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 6 (+1) deaths
Wednesday April 1, 2020**

This has been a very mixed day. Things are good and things are terrifying.

Our neighbor and Yogi, Meta, invited me to join her online yoga class which took place this evening. I've never really done yoga; I'm not flexible and the moves are awkward for me but I was soon to learn that yoga is not just about poses. Meta led with a lesson, a lesson that was spot on for my life, for a lot of our lives in these fraught times. Figure out what you are to do in this moment, do it as whole-heartedly and enthusiastically as you can, then let it go. Don't be tied to the outcomes. Just do what you need to do as well as you can. That's it. What else can we do? All the energy going to worry and fear is a waste of time and emotionally damaging. I believe that but I forget, sometimes, to live it. This was the good.

Joe called this afternoon. When he was walked down to medical today by a masked guard, for a follow up treatment for an infected cut from shaving, the staff were all wearing "respirators". That wasn't the case yesterday when he was there. He says that they are trying to keep it quiet but everyone at the jail has heard that there are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the jail, a male and a female inmate. There are said to be several "rule-out" COVID-19 patients, as well. "Mom, we are in a box," there is no way to try to stay safe. This was the terrifying.

**Day 25 403 (+40) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 7 (+1) deaths
Thursday April 2, 2020**

My FaceBook post from today: “Former US Representative Chris Collins was convicted and sentenced on a securities fraud charge. The judge delayed his jail time because of the novel Coronavirus. I’m not saying HE should be locked up right now but justice seems pretty one-sided when THIS guy is free and my loved one and yours are sitting ducks, locked in a box with no way to stay safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. Jails and prisons are petri dishes for this nightmare and our people are the culture medium. ASK GOVERNOR MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM to release prisoners NOW because later is too late.”

People all over the country are calling for release of prisoners; public defenders and faith groups, families and civil rights groups, along with the inmates themselves are pleading for release and safety. It’s not just the abolitionists.

Meanwhile, life at home doesn’t pause. Rowan’s new favorite game is “ball chase” — croquet mallets, tennis balls, a lawn and playfulness are all you need. Tag you’re it. Strike your tennis ball with the mallet and try to tag your opponent’s tennis ball with yours. Everyone swings at once! What gets us through the day (and wears us out) is this constant stream of imaginative play and conversation, punctuated with meals and snacks, bike rides and walks, books and drawing, screen time and movies. Of course, there are meals to cook, a garden to tend, laundry to wash and all the other stuff that keeps a household together. My energy is up and down. Right now, I’m exhausted.

**Day 26 495 (+92) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 10 (+3) deaths
Friday April 3, 2020**

I hope this New Mexico, 92-case, COVID-19 jump since yesterday is an aberration, perhaps a catching up on a backlog of testing. Things continue to change; numbers change, recommendations change, more and more things shut down. Jessica and Kris tell us that the base is going to shutdown. The CDC had been recommending that healthy people NOT wear masks in public, now the CDC recommends that everyone wear cloth masks when in public. As I understand it, people should wear masks if they go to the grocery store or pharmacy, for example. If everyone wore a mask in public, it could slow the transmission of the virus by people who might not have a clue that they are infected. It turns out that there may be at least 25% of infected people who are asymptomatic. That translates to a transmission nightmare.

Tonight, I indulged myself and read the news before bed. It’s late. I am no better informed and I don’t feel better. But it is compelling. I want to know, I want to get a sense of what we are dealing with here, a sense of what might be bearing down on us. I know the people in those stories could be me or my family and friends. That’s why it’s so compelling, I think.

I’d rather spend the last hour of the day differently, though. I’d rather think on the great moments of the day which, ironically, mostly include Rowan. Rowan stacking rocks into cairns in the front yard and naming each stack. Rowan making me stop in the middle of Johnson Field to lead me in a surprisingly sophisticated yoga session. Rowan, who wouldn’t even be here, staying with us today, except for the pandemic.

**Day 27 543 (+48) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 11 (+1) deaths
Saturday April 4, 2020**

Hunker down. Be cautious. Stay healthy. Live.

On Monday, Alex and Alicia’s amazingly cute mini dachshund puppy will be back. It has been a fabulous coincidence that they got a puppy about the same time Rowan has had to stay with us full-time and be away from her mom and Kris and their dogs. We’ve been puppy sitting two to three times a week for three weeks or so. The routine has been that Alex drops Carli the puppy off with her little crate, dog food, dishes and toys. Over the last few days, I’ve started to think about the possibility that Coronavirus might possibly be carried on Carli’s fur or

on her puppy stuff, given that both Alex and Alicia are working in hospitals. I don't know what hands on procedures Alex may become involved with as COVID-19 cases ramp up at his hospital or what exposure Alicia might encounter working with the same in-patients day in and day out. What I do know is that they are at tremendously greater risk of coming in contact with the virus than we are. We are not going to grocery stores or pharmacies or anywhere except outside for walks with Rowan on her balance bike. We have been picking up school lunches which seems quite safe. It is a hand-off of a bagged lunch by a gloved staff member, outside in the open. As safe as that seems, though, I am going to ask Charles what he thinks about not doing that either. We don't really need it and, even though the risk seems incredibly small, why take that risk when we don't need to? As we seem to be just weeks away from whatever the peak of the outbreak might be, it make sense to double down now. After this, we will ride the curve of cases down the other side to whatever comes next. As always, what comes next is unknown.

So, the new plan is that Carli will be dropped off, set on the ground for us to pick up without human contact, without any stuff. We will wipe her down, wash our hands, and then enjoy the energy of a kid and a puppy for the day.

(Tonight, as I head for bed, it is just turning tomorrow. I spent the last hour or more in the kitchen; listening to music, starting the dishwasher, making muffins, taking laundry out of the dryer, packaging up the 3 1/2 quarts of soup I made today and generally taking care of things. I feel much less exhausted and much more satisfied with myself than I did the other night when I spent that time perseverating over Coronavirus news. And, we've got muffins ready for the morning!)

**Day 28 624 (+81) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 12 (+1) deaths
Sunday April 5, 2020**

The stories out of the Coronavirus hot spots around the country have been increasingly heart wrenching. The threat to our own safety is feeling increasingly more present and dangerous. It's an invisible, cruel army marching relentlessly toward us. It's a dam straining under the weight of an historic flood. I hope against hope that we will side step the worst but that hope erodes when, on our walk this afternoon, I see a group of people playing soccer on the north side of Johnson Field while, on the south side of the field, it looks like cheerleader practice— complete with young women being tossed into the air by their male counterparts. I try to ignore the gnawing fear in the pit of my stomach. For Joe who is locked up. For Jessica, an RT at Kaseman ER. For Alex, also working on the front lines, at UNMH. For Alicia seeing patients everyday at the VA. For our entire community.

This morning I was in a kind of hospital myself, a make-believe hospital with Rowan “distribuing” candy medicine along with advice to wash your hands and keep your distance so you don't get “the new cold”. She also designed a special hotel for these times. I think she'd like us to go to it. The rooms are “THIS far apart” (arms spread wide) and every room has its own hallway to get to the pool. There are lots of pools; one for each, apparently. Also, when you are getting your waffle at breakfast, a wall comes down behind you to keep the people apart.

**Day 29 686 (+62) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 12 (+0) deaths
Monday April 6, 2020**

This was a tough day. We spent a lot of time in the backyard and the weather was a very pleasant 70 degrees but, still, the day weighed heavy. I didn't feel like making meals or doing anything. Just wanted to sit in the swing on the back patio and watch the day slip by. Rowan was feeling the weight of the world, too. More than once she crumpled, unable to handle minor disappointments or corrections. Sobbing in her room, tears streaming down her face, she tried

to calm herself in the wake of overwhelming emotion. We knew that the emotional storm was more about missing her mom, and the effort of keeping it all together hoisted onto the shoulders of a six-year-old, than anything else. Most days, she has been happy and joyful. She has thrived. But she has suffered, too, mostly simmering at a manageable level beneath the surface. Today she was tired and it caught her off guard.

Jessica was feeling it, too. She called late, well after Rowan had gone to bed. We talked for an hour. She shared her fear, grief and how she has been struggling to keep herself together. She and Kris, though, have come up with a plan to be sure Rowan gets to go home at some point in a not too distant future. Assuming the epidemic peaks and then declines to some kind of manageable level in the next few months, Kris will no longer be under threat of being called up to National Guard duty, Jessica's work will feel safer and the two of them could arrange their work schedules to allow at least one of them to be home every day of the week. In that case, Rowan could go home. She would finally have her mom, Kris, her dogs, school and friends back. But, with no vaccine and no immunity to the novel Coronavirus, Charles and I would presumably still be at high risk for serious illness. Best case scenario, we all stay healthy and Rowan gets to go home. We might not see Rowan, though, except for FaceTime and phone calls until we develop immunity through vaccine or illness.

Even when you win, you lose, in this pandemic.

**Day 30 794 (+108) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 13 (+1) deaths
Tuesday April 7, 2020**

Joe's public defender, in Gallup district court yesterday, asked a judge for the release of an inmate because of the COVID-19 outbreak. (Joe was NOT charged with physically hurting ANYONE) The public defender said that he knows what is going on in McKinley County Jail because he speaks to the nurse over there daily. Nonetheless, the judge not only denied the release, HE ROLLED HIS EYES and set the trial for September. The inmate was told that if he couldn't make bail, he could just sit there. This was a shocking display of indifference to the danger of a possible COVID-19 outbreak. Joe has also reported that there are at least two confirmed cases and some rule-out cases among inmates at the jail right now. The inmates are sitting in a box with no way to practice social distancing and they do not have anywhere near adequate access to soap or any other way to protect themselves. Staff is also at risk and there is the additional risk of staff bringing the virus into the jail from outside. McKinley County is being hit hard with new COVID-19 cases. This is a dangerous situation.

I posted a slightly modified version of this story on FaceBook that named the judge and did not identify Joe as the inmate who was denied. I also included a request to PLEASE WRITE THE JUDGE AND ASK HIM TO RELEASE PRISONERS FROM MCKINLEY COUNTY JAIL NOW!

**Day 31 865 (+71) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 16 (+3) deaths
Wednesday April 8, 2020**

This is awkward. Joe called and said that he was wrong about the judge's name in the courtroom on Monday. In my Facebook post yesterday, I called the judge out by name. So, I wrote a follow up letter tonight, adding an apology to the beginning of the original letter and using "strike through" to identify the mistaken portion of the letter. I hope he wasn't too offended. I hope he listens to the message. I hope he will be a champion during this pandemic. He'll have to start soon or it will be too late. I also posted the correction on FaceBook and private messaged it to my FaceBook friends who had reacted to the post.

"Dear Judge DePauli,

I WAS MISTAKEN. EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE THE ASSIGNED JUDGE, IT WAS, APPARENTLY NOT YOU WHO MY SON WITNESSED “ROLLING HIS EYES” IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR RELEASE DUE TO THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC. The rest of the message still applies and I do hope you are able to use your power to save lives and help stem the tide of the epidemic. My son is an inmate at the jail and we expect him to be released in the next couple of days through the bond process. In the meantime, a guy who was sleeping less than six feet away from him (perhaps 4 feet?) until this morning, became symptomatic, went to medical and didn't come back. My son and the others are understandably afraid that they may have been exposed to the virus and may take the virus back out with them as they secure their releases. There is no way to overstate how important it is to release as many as you can, for the inmates' and community's safety.

Thank you. Stay well. Sincere apologies for the misidentification. Diane
~~—My son was in your courtroom on Monday when he witnessed you “roll your eyes” at a request for the release of an inmate due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is possible that you didn't roll your eyes, exactly, but your facial expression strongly suggested to him disregard for the seriousness of the epidemic we are facing.~~

McKinley county is being hit hard. I am asking to you to take the COVID-19 outbreak seriously and to realize that jails are particularly dangerous environments. I know that there are lots of cases where there has been no victim that has been physically hurt — cases where release of people accused of various offenses would not pose a threat to the community. I urge you to consider that and to release as many people as possible. The more people sit in jail, where it is impossible to safely distance yourself from others and there is inadequate hygiene and sanitation, the more you are putting people at risk of serious illness and death.

If the virus is given a chance to spread inside the jail, the facility can, itself, become a “super-spreader” for the surrounding community. This is a public safety emergency and you are uniquely situated to help. The death you prevent could be your own or someone you love. The death you prevent could be mine, my son's or others I care about.

I hope that we will all do whatever we can to slow this virus down so that the toll on our families and communities is lessened as much possible.

I wish for good health for you and all of us”

Meanwhile the pandemic keeps on coming. There have been 434,114 confirmed Coronavirus cases in the United States and 14,800 deaths since our first case was reported less than three months ago. No country in the world has reported more confirmed cases than we have. In New Mexico, we have almost 900 confirmed cases and 16 deaths, so far. Things are ramping up. The surge has begun?

**Day 32 989 (+124) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 17 (+1) deaths
Thursday April 9, 2020**

The judge emailed me today. I will mull over his response and think about responding back. Now that I have his email address, it will be easier to do. He cites violence, recidivism and risk of flight as the reasons releases are denied but acknowledges that, “Of course, with the virus upon us, what conditions of release to set for those having the above propensities becomes more complicated and difficult.”

We took a new family portrait this morning. A portrait for our times. Mom and Kris are not in the photo, neither are our faces. Gramma, Papa, and Rowan are all wearing the cloth masks Jessica made for us.

Lots of parents and caregivers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic are separating themselves from their kids and loved ones to protect them from the “the new cold”, as Rowan calls it. I am on the look out for stories from some of those families to share with Rowan. Perhaps, that would help further normalize this experience for her. Yesterday we heard of two

families like us. Kim and Donna's daughter, who is screening potential COVID-19 patients at UNMH is no longer going home after work. A co-worker of Alicia's has left her 18-month-old daughter in the care of grandparents. In these families, like ours, parents and kids are separated from each other and no one knows how long it will last. When we are counting our blessings, as hard as this is, we should take a moment to be thankful that we are able to keep our loved ones safe. Many families don't have that luxury.

"What if I stay here too long? When can I eat ice cream with Eva?" On the APS@Home broadcast this morning, one of the teachers asked kids to create questions from prompts that included "What if" and "When" Rowan's answers to these prompts speaks to our reality. Eva is her beloved teenage babysitter.

This afternoon, after lunch, the three of us put on our masks and headed out to conduct a literal back-alley deal. In order to hold a closing on a new Real Estate Contract, we were directed to pull into the alley behind American Escrow. The folder containing the paperwork was delivered to us by a masked man (Keith Mallory). We, trusting no one, signed the papers with our own pens and sanitized our hands as soon as the deal was done. Our masks went into the wash as soon as we got home.

Every day brings some kind of "never imagined this" moment.

**Day 33 1,091 (+102) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 19 (+2) deaths
Friday April 10, 2020**

Just before going to bed last night, Rowan lost her second tooth. Boy, oh boy, was she excited and wound up. She's been working on the tooth for a number of days but it got especially loose tonight. She had wanted to yank it out herself but couldn't quite muster the courage. As she stood in front of her mirror, at her request, I wrapped a piece of floss around the bottom of the tooth, caught an edge and asked for her go-ahead to see if the tooth would pop out. Obviously nervous, she nonetheless said "Yes". I gave a gentle jerk on the floss. That tooth *flew* out of her mouth and hit the wall on its way to the floor. Meanwhile, although I warned Rowan to expect it to bleed, she got scared and cried when the blood pooled into the divot where the tooth used to be and spilled over to coat the edges of her lips. It quit bleeding after a bit of pressure and blotting of the blood by a tissue followed by a cold water rinse. After tucking the tooth safely into a little plastic bag she had found for just this inevitability, she also wrote a note for the tooth fairy and labeled the envelope "I lost a tooth". She was especially late to bed and later still to settle into sleep. Sometime after 5am she woke up, checked under her pillow and called me to see what the Tooth Fairy had brought. I went back to bed. She tried... Thank you, Charles for taking the early morning shift! (Again, and as always)

Today was busy with an hour of APS@HOME in the morning, Carli the puppy to play with, a picnic at UNM, dyeing Easter eggs and a movie (The Tooth Fairy", naturally) and popcorn before dinner. In between all that there was packing lunch for the picnic, messages to return, telephone conversations to be had, dinner to cook and a load of laundry to do.

We have really made an effort to make this as natural and positive an experience for Rowan as possible. It's been good for us, too, because it's helped us to stay mostly upbeat and energetic. All in all, being busy has been very good for us.

Joe bonded out of McKinley County Jail today. Counting down 14 days,,,,, the time in which COVID-19 may show up.

**Day 34 1,174 (+81) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 20 (+1) deaths
Saturday April 11, 2020**

One month ago today, New Mexico recorded its first three COVID-19 cases. Charles and I were at Ojo Caliente for two nights to celebrate our anniversary. Even though New Mexico had

not yet reported any COVID-19 cases as we headed to Ojo, we knew the virus was probably already here. Before we left home for Ojo we decided that this would be our last outing until things settled down. If we had known how quickly things would change, we might have made a different decision.

When we arrived at Ojo, state and national emergencies had not yet been declared, school had not yet been shut down. All of that happened in the span of the three days and two nights we spent at Ojo soaking in the mineral springs and hiking. In the one month since then, New York has seen more than 180,000 confirmed cases and more than 8,600 deaths from the virus. This week they experienced as many as 800 deaths a day for four consecutive days plus 200 or so deaths each of those days in homes and on the street, many of those were likely related to COVID-19. There have been almost 1.8 million confirmed cases worldwide with 109,000 deaths attributed the virus— certainly these numbers would be higher if we knew the actual toll. These are unimaginable numbers, especially if you allow yourself to think about actual people. The pain and fear of the infected, the heartbreak of their family and friends, and the physical and emotional toll on the medical, emergency response personnel and others who tried in vain to save them is almost too much to contemplate. So I don't. I try not to, too much. Even though it's painful to step out of the abstract and think about the real, it's necessary. We have got to treat this thing like it is a direct threat to each and every one of us because it is exactly that. To discount the danger of the virus is to make the world a more dangerous place for all of us.

**Day 35 1,245 (+71) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 26 (+6) deaths
Sunday April 12, 2020**

Easter Bunny Sunday. Rowan has been SO excited about this. The Easter Bunny (mom) provided everything so it was easy for us to put it together. We got Jessica on the phone for a FaceTime call in the early morning before Rowan left her room to go look for eggs and find her basket. Another FaceTime moment. It's starting to feel normal.

One of my stress responses these days has been an intermittent twitch in my left eye, usually associated with something specific like, for example, thinking about actually doing home schooling. I also find that I am stoic reading stories of death and loss but I cry when I read stories of hope and recovery, like the one today that featured two critically ill pregnant women. One of them recovered enough to go home with her pregnancy intact and presumably healthy, the other one had an emergency C-section but the three and a half pound baby boy is doing well and the mom is starting to recover, too. I cried to the point I couldn't speak. Does this happen to other people, too?

**Day 36 1,345 (+100) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 31 (+5) deaths
Monday April 13, 2020**

**Day 37 1,407 (+62) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 36 (+5) deaths
Tuesday April 14, 2020**

Charles just shared a piece of news that caused an immediate stress reaction in me. My chest feels tight, there is a ligature around my head, there is a tightness in my throat. I feel it in the pit of my stomach.

Advocates, incarcerated people and their families have been calling for the release of prisoners because of COVID-19. Jails and prisons are Petri dishes for infection. It is impossible to follow even the simplest recommendations for frequent hand washing with soap and to maintain social distances of at least six feet. As many people as possible need to get out of there, not only for their safety but for the safety of staff and the communities surrounding the jails and prisons.

The story Charles told me was that a person recently released from incarceration in New York because of the Coronavirus, has been accused of committing murder. The impact of that event and accusation could derail releases everywhere. It won't matter that, in the United States, several dozen murders may have occurred on this day and most all of them by people who were not recently released from jails and prisons. I fear that this one event, even though quite likely extremely rare, may prevent many more releases— leading to many more deaths in and out of our jails and prisons.

I've been thinking more and more about what this whole business of extreme social distancing/isolation that Charles and I are practicing might look like over the long haul. As busy and engaging as it is having Rowan here, that won't last as long as the threat of the Coronavirus for us. Things will, at some point in the next several months, get back to some semblance of normal. School will probably start again in August. The reason I think school will start in August is, simply, because I can't imagine that it won't. My thinking isn't based on the virus at all, just on what seems right. Sounds like our president...Ugh.

The reason it's weighing so heavily on me is that I imagine that Charles and I will go on practicing an isolating form of social distancing until there is a vaccine for us. We really would like to be here for 10, 15 or even more years if we can remain reasonably healthy and mentally intact. If we can be patient enough to hold out long enough, wouldn't it make sense to avoid exposure, even if it takes a year or more? What kind of experience would that be? How would we stay engaged with our family and friends? I imagine we might walk a lot of urban miles without going to restaurants and coffee shops, take a lot of hikes, observe a lot of nature, read a lot of books, and go a little stir crazy. We would change. People have done more with less, I want to remember that and embrace our decisions wholeheartedly and with a tenacious resolve to make it work. I want to believe that we can make decisions that will work for us at each juncture. There won't be any one choice that will take us all the way through this thing. There will be many choices to be made on this journey. I wish I could see around the next corner.

Two weeks ago, 1100 cases and 31 deaths ago, I was having this same conversation with myself. I will probably revisit it again before this is over. Some questions keep surfacing, unanswered and unanswerable.

**Day 38 1,484 (+77) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 36 (+0) deaths
Wednesday April 15, 2020**

The garden that Charles has been tending since before we knew we'd be practicing an isolating form of social distancing is paying off. We have so much baby kale we've been blanching and freezing it. We have had green onion tops for a couple of weeks and today we ate our first baby lettuce. I've been cooking a lot more since we started our isolation. And, since we aren't shopping at all and Jessica and Kris are wisely not shopping often, having fresh veg from the garden is a *huge* plus for us.

We had one of my favorite kinds of dinners tonight. No complicated recipes, no extended cooking times. Just simple food. Baked sweet potato; tofu cubes seasoned with Tamari; baby lettuce from the garden and orange bell pepper chunks tossed with sunflower seeds and Dion's ranch dressing; and sautéed baby chard from the garden. I also got a pot of beans cooked and bread baked. It felt like a good day in the kitchen.

That bread is calling my name. I think I will light a candle, pour a glass of wine, slice some bread and read a bit of Terry Tempest Williams before I turn in.

**Day 39 1,597 (+113) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 44 (+8) deaths
Thursday April 16, 2020**

Despite my best intentions, I can't keep track of the days. Even the hours slip by without me. Today, for example, it seemed we barely arrived home from our picnic lunch at UNM when it was time to think about dinner. Rowan wanted mac 'n cheese and pizza. No problem. We've got seven-inch pre-made pizza crust and marinara in the fridge. We've got frozen mixed vegetables and already washed and ready-to-go baby lettuce from the garden. And, of course, there is the mac'n cheese in a box. We were all set for a quick and easy to prepare dinner, with Rowan the principal chef for the boxed mac 'n cheese.

Before cooking though, we got distracted by in a nature show. Beautiful photography and compelling tales of life and death. The caribou dies, the wolf lives. The caribou lives, the wolves may starve. Dinner for us is, thankfully, much less dramatic. It goes without a hitch and is surprisingly good. I mixed lots of vegetables into my mac 'n cheese.

After dinner I glanced at my phone and saw a text from 56 minutes before. "We are going to get started." It was a message from Barron. I had totally missed the monthly Justice Advisory Board (JAB) ZOOM meeting. It was happening even as we were oohing and awing about the mac 'n cheese Rowan made.

I am so focused on living this new life. Getting through the day, an entire day every day without breaks, with a six year old, takes a lot of energy and focus if we are all to stay happy and sane during our isolation. Home School activities and preparing meals three times a day takes a lot of time, all on its own. I am not complaining, though. We are so very lucky for so many reasons. But, the one fortunate thing that really struck us today is how amazing it is to be just a couple of blocks from UNM. The campus is beautiful and peaceful and the walkways make coasting around campus great fun for a kid.

Things that were important to me BC (before COVID) still feel important but they increasingly take a back seat. I can't rely on my good intentions to get me into a ZOOM meeting if that is what I want to do. I'm going to have to write a note and pin it to my shirt.

**Day 40 1,711 (+114) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 51 (+7) deaths
Friday April 17, 2020**

I spilled beer on my keyboard two nights ago. Just a few tablespoons of beer across the bottom left of the board. I turned the keyboard over immediately and dried it with a towel. I poured some 90% rubbing alcohol over the same spot and did the same. After all that, the keyboard has been sitting upside down in organic short-grain brown rice for two days. I vacuumed the keyboard in case of rice dust and it is working so far. Time will tell if it will survive.

Spilling beer on my keyboard is significant for me because I love my keyboard and I love my beer in the evening. And, though I love them together, they will have to start practicing social distancing or they will have to stop being together at all.

It took me a while before I realized that the beer I spilled was a CORONA.

I almost ordered another keyboard today, even before I found out if this one was still functional. But, I'm holding off. Potentially wasting money, just because I can, feels disrespectful to all of those who are struggling to meet basic needs. The pandemic has made it more difficult to take anything for granted.

From entry on Saturday March 21, 2020, Day 13 of my Coronavirus Diary – (In the United States) "...0 to almost 18,000 identified cases in two months..."

Now, less than a month later, we have 699,448 cases and 32,790 deaths recorded in the United States

Day 41 1798 (+87) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 53 (+2) deaths

Saturday April 18, 2020

Today was Charles's 73rd birthday. Rowan cut flowers and made a poster, I made coffee and a chocolate cake with cherry topping to prepare for a socially distanced, Coronavirus-safe birthday party with Alex and Alicia. They sat at a table on the patio while we sat on the porch. Their coffee was in a thermos at their table. We had our own thermos of coffee.

It was more complex than I imagined to set up our party to be as safe as possible. The cake and topping were covered to protect from contamination. I washed my hands between every step. Alex and Alicia's table was set before they got here and the coffee mugs were washed with hot water and then placed in the microwave to heat them further.

In cleaning up, I was the only one who handled Alex and Alicia's things. I used a sanitizing wipe on the thermos, especially the handle and lid and followed up with hot soapy water. All of our dishes went into the dishwasher.

It's been more than a month since we've sat down to visit with anyone but ourselves. Although it wasn't easy, our little party felt safe. We relaxed and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

It's been 34 days since Rowan last saw her mom in person. She's stopped asking when she is going home.

Day 42 1845 (+47) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 55 (+2) deaths Sunday April 19, 2020

Here in New Mexico, it took ten days to double the number of COVID-19 cases to where it stands today. A month ago it took just four days for cases to double. This sounds like very good news. Of course, the number of confirmed cases is not actual cases but I am assuming the rise in confirmed cases is reflective of actual case rise. This appears to validate that the stay-at-home orders, school closures and non-essential business closures have had their intended effect. If we can continue in this vein, hospitals won't be overwhelmed and everyone who becomes seriously ill should be able to access the medical care they need. That is the goal and I am more hopeful each day that the goal is being met.

We are up against more than just the virus, unfortunately. Our own POS president has incited people to rebel against the very measures that are proving effective in reducing COVID-19 cases and deaths. He has stated that he won't wear a mask. After claiming that he had the ultimate power to decide when the economy would open up again and how, he acknowledged that the governors will be the ones to make those decisions, based on their state's unique situation. Then, just a day later, he fomented rebellion against governors' stay-at-home orders and business closures with tweets such as "Liberate Minnesota" "Liberate Virginia" and "Liberate Michigan". People are gathering in crowds without masks and without distancing themselves to protest those shelter-in-place and stay-at-home orders. There is a protest scheduled tomorrow, here in Albuquerque, and I am pissed. When the protesters spread Coronavirus and become sick themselves with COVID-19 they will put others in danger. When they walk into Kaseman Hospital or UNMH they are messing with my own family.

Day 43 1971 (+126) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 58 (+3) deaths Monday April 20, 2020

I made a two-sided poster and placed it in our front yard. The message reads: "STAYING HOME to keep our family and community safe". This morning Rowan took chalk and I took my cup of coffee out to the sidewalk. We wrote messages for our neighbors — for anyone passing by. Rowan wrote, "Thank you for staying home". She had no suggestion or help from me. I wrote, "We love you. Stay safe." While Rowan worked on a big chalk earth, I sat on the curb and enjoyed the sunshine. We waved at people in cars as they passed by.

Day 44 2072 (+101) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 65 (+7) deaths
Tuesday April 21, 2020

“Do I have to live with Gramma and Papa for the rest of my whole life?” This is the question Rowan asked her mom on their FaceTime call this morning. She hasn’t asked this question of us. Jessica assured Rowan that she would be going home at some point but she could not say when. “How long?” is still an unanswerable question, so they talked about how Rowan would get all her stuff back to her mom’s and Rowan thought out loud about how she will have to get used to her bedroom again, because it has been so long.

We had a fun surprise from one of Rowan’s friends this afternoon. Lorelei and her mom, Kirsten, did an impromptu, drive by play date this afternoon. They brought a card that Lorelei had made for Rowan. The girls visited and giggled with Lorelei sitting in the car and Rowan running around the yard and being wonderfully, six-year-old silly. By the time the visit was over Rowan had managed to get her blankie stuck in the tree.

Kirsten told me that this ordeal has taken a toll on her daughter that has manifested as more frequent meltdowns and problem behaviors. Jessica tells me that many of her friends have reported regression in their children’s behavior and more meltdowns. Rowan has proved to be amazingly resilient. She has stayed busily engaged and active. She laughs readily and is appropriately cooperative. Although we know this has been difficult for her, she appears to be thriving in spite of it all.

Day 45 2210 (+138) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 71 (+6) deaths
Wednesday April 22, 2020

I didn’t want to get out of bed this morning. I just wanted to forget everything, stay cozy, and go back to sleep. But, you have to make yourself get out of bed eventually, even if there is nowhere to go and no one to see. Of course, that’s not quite true because there is Charles and there is Rowan already up and getting ready to watch APS@Home, the school district broadcast. No isolation is possible here and that’s probably a really good thing. I am thankful.

It’s Earth Day today which reminds me that existence is much larger than the life we are navigating and the uncertainties we face. One of the teachers on the broadcast this morning showed us how to make sun catchers with found materials and a few supplies. Rowan and I colored clear plastic discs with permanent markers. We made rainbows and “Water is Life” and “Love” discs. We made butterfly discs and trees. Charles helped us put it together. It was beautiful and is hanging in our dining room window.

Charles and I continued a conversation that remains unfinished. Charles said he figures he might be practicing this social isolation for the rest of his life. I agreed that we will have to be patient with it for a good long while before we might know what life will look like for the long haul. But, Charles asks, what would we do when Alex and Alicia have a baby. How do you establish a relationship? It’s frustrating and disheartening to think too much. Maybe, down the road, depending on how things play out, we will choose to modify our risk vs trying to eliminate it as much as possible. Would we choose to interact with family more or less “normally”? Who would we include in that family circle? We could continue to take as many precautions as we can when we resume doing our own shopping (masks, gloves, non busy time of day) and just know we will be exposed eventually and not too soon we hope.

Reports I heard today, from people at UNMH and Presbyterian Hospital, indicate that we have reached “peak resource utilization”. Does that also mean that we have peaked in number of new cases per day? There were 138 new cases since yesterday, our highest jump thus far. The email from UNMH says that it means we have done a good job of social distancing and testing in our state. The Gallup area (where Joe is) is an area that is currently “VERY” active. But, if we continue with our staying-at-home and other measures, it looks like there will be resources to take care of everyone who gets sick. Besides avoiding a potentially deadly disease ourselves, that’s why we are doing all this. The email goes on to say that “Over the

next several weeks we will have some busy days and we will also be starting to settle in for the long haul where we will be seeing a steady but manageable number of COVID patients”

I’ve been watching our infection rate (as confirmed positive COVID-19 cases/number of people tested) go up from 1.5% to 3% to 5% yesterday. What does that mean? There is more Coronavirus in the community? Who is getting tested? How can we know what that number means in terms of community and individual risk? I don’t really know how all these pieces fit together and what they tell us.

I keep reading Coronavirus news. I keep track of the numbers. I keep trying to figure everything out. It’s all a fog and I can’t see my hands in front of my face.

It’s almost midnight. I hear yet another helicopter headed to UNMH. They have been coming one after another all night. There are so many more than we might usually expect. I imagine the patients onboard those helicopters. Scared and hoping against hope they will survive to tell their grandkids about this brush with an unprecedented global pandemic. I am sending them my most fervent hopes for recovery.

**Day 46 2379 (+169) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 78 (+7) deaths
Thursday April 23, 2020**

169 new cases in a day doesn’t seem like a flattened curve to me. The most new confirmed cases in a day in New Mexico were the last two days, yesterday with 138 new cases and today with 169. Perhaps this really is the peak and it’s all going to get better from here. I hope so, but, I fear not.

I wonder if “quarantine brain” is really a thing? Today Charles and I were laughing at ourselves because neither of us could figure out what day it was. We had to look at the calendar. I messaged Alex and told him that, if we get hit over the head, do *not* ask us what day it is. We can’t figure out what day it is, even without a bump on the head. Alex responded, “Haha. Oh man. That’s retired life!” That could be true in our case. The neighbors, who have been working from home, called it “quarantine brain” and maybe that is true, too. In any case, I am relieved to have at least two excuses, besides old age, for not knowing what day it is.

**Day 47 2521 (+142) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 84 (+6) deaths
Friday April 24, 2020**

It’s been three weeks since we got restocked with groceries. We ran out of fresh veggies a while ago (except for garden kale and lettuce) and the fruit was almost gone. Jessica shopped for us today, for herself and Kris yesterday. I think the effort and sheer volume of dealing with almost a month’s work of grocery shopping for five people was a bit much, She vowed to stick to a two week max span between shopping trips. After they unloaded the groceries onto the front porch, Jessica and Kris stayed for an appropriately distanced visit. They sat on the patio while I sat on the porch. Jessica and I had a glass of wine and we all enjoyed each other’s company for a while, kind of like life used to be.

Unpacking the groceries felt a bit like Christmas. Jessica had added some unexpected treats (like cookies she had made, cherry tomatoes and multi-colored index cards) which added to the excitement. I was dancing around the kitchen while Charles hauled things to the basement and updated our basement freezer/pantry list. The dark chocolate and wine were the icing on my cake and, again, I am counting my blessings.

An article in the New York Times today highlighted New Mexico’s early and aggressive response to the threat of the virus. The stay-at-home order, the closing of schools, and businesses, along with testing, is credited with keeping the number of COVID-19 cases much lower than they might have been.

Meanwhile, Rowan is on her second day of riding her bike with pedals (she's been using it as a balance bike, without pedals, for a month or so). She and I headed over to UNM this afternoon where she rode and rode and rode. "This is a lot more funner with the pedals!"

Day 48 2660 (+139) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 93 (+9) deaths
Saturday April 25, 2020

Charles's allergies seem worse this evening after having improved over these last days. As soon as Charles was feeling better, we stopped doing the things that caused the improvement. A couple of days ago, in response to feeling better— less frequent and less severe bouts of coughing, being able to talk without triggering a bout of coughing— Charles quit using the Flonase he had started several days prior to improving. About that same time, I turned off the continuous circulation feature of our heating and cooling system that filters the air. The result? Charles's symptoms have markedly worsened.

We responded to the improvement in Charles's almost debilitating allergy symptoms like some people are responding to the pandemic. We did *not* check the facts, the pollen counts, to see if they had improved. We discounted that the measures we had taken were the reason for the improvement. We were absolutely unscientific. We didn't stop to assess the situation. We gave no thought to anything other than the fact that Charles was feeling better. That same kind of thinking, I believe, is driving some peoples' reluctance to continue social distancing and to be patient with the stay at home measures and business closures surrounding the pandemic. These measures, that are helping to reduce COVID-19 infection rates and deaths, are working. But, people are understandably anxious to ditch these same measures because they have also been extremely disruptive. Using allergy medication and turning on an air filtration system was very effective and not difficult to do but we, nonetheless, ditched those efforts way too early and without a thought. Consequences from an unscientific and unreasoned response like that in relation to this pandemic would be devastating.

We can't afford to be distracted by our discomfort or by our comfort, either. We can't afford to lose focus. We are staying home to keep our family and our community safe. We are staying home to save our lives.

Day 49 2726 (+66) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 99 (+6) deaths
Sunday April 26, 2020

This was the first really warm evening of the season, the one we've been waiting for with growing anticipation. We celebrated with mini-candy bars and a bonfire in the backyard. Charles and I drank Prosecco and we let Rowan stay up late. She was enchanted by being out in the night. It was magical and an adventure, too. All tucked in with her pillow, blankie and stuffed animals on the patio swing, she eventually slept while Charles and I visited. She wanted to stay out there all night. It was lovely. I drank a lot more Prosecco than Charles.

Tomorrow is a "school day". Carli will be here about 630. I hope Rowan sleeps well tonight so that I can, too.

Day 50 2823 (+97) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 104 (+5) deaths
Monday April 27, 2020

I headed out for an evening walk while Charles and Rowan watched Ratatouille. Central Avenue was oddly quiet, even for a Monday at 7pm. I wonder how many of the businesses will make it through this pandemic. A number of them are staying open in some fashion or other, at least as many are closed. Little Bear Coffee, open just five months, and Ihatov, a brand spanking new bakery/coffee shop that opened March 4th just as COVID-19 was about to shut

us down, are among those attempting to stay open and stay afloat in the midst of our isolation. I wish them well but I am not patronizing them. We are being very conservative in our quarantine efforts. I hope we don't kill our neighborhood while we save ourselves.

Jessica responded: I worry about our local businesses, too. I wish I could make any difference for them, but we're playing it super safe as well. The local economy will likely look very different this time next year...

My mask feels stifling today. I had it off, but the vascular tech came in so I put it back on. I feel like I can barely catch my breath and this is just a paper surgical mask. The N95 and P100's are far worse. These are dark days for those of us with claustrophobia!

I have a sore tooth that I pray let's up. It's where I got a new crown this year. I was eating crunchy stuff so I'm hoping it's just irritated. The dentists are closed except for emergencies. At what point do you force them to risk their health to see you? Same with my primary care doc. There are issues, but are they worthwhile emergencies? I think I at least will have a lot of catching up to do once this is all over...

And I responded back to her: It's quite remarkable how pervasive the effects of the pandemic have been on everyone. Hang in there, kiddo. Here's to being able to catch up. Sooner rather than later...

**Day 51 2974 (+151) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 110 (+6) deaths
Tuesday April 28, 2020**

**Day 52 3213 (+239) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 112 (+2) deaths
Wednesday April 29, 2020**

From a New York Times piece today, "...it's a good time to think about what matters to you most and then process current events through that lens." This speaks to me. And, so, my existential crisis continues...

When push comes to shove, and it has, the thing that matters most to me is taking care of my family, those things for which I am personally responsible and those things over which I have a modicum of control. It matters to me that I find enjoyment and thankfulness in the mundane moments of life and the oft taken for granted things like sunshine, bird song, clean air to breathe, a stocked pantry, a roof over my head and being alive. It matters to me that I appreciate my privilege and that I find a way to share my privilege with others. But, it bothers me that I am deleting almost all the email calls-to-action that I am receiving, without even reading them. It bothers me that I don't want to engage. I do not want to make phone calls. I do not want to write emails. I do not want to participate in Zoom meetings. What I feel I can do and want to do at this time is to be patient and kind with those families and individuals who have Real Estate Contracts with us so that they and we can get through these worsening economic conditions. I would like to continue to financially support Albuquerque Mutual Aid who are shopping for and delivering food and supplies to families in our community. I want to be able to focus on Rowan's and our well-being and making meals in this no-going-to-restaurants life. I want us to take care of ourselves physically and emotionally and that takes time. It all takes time, more time than I feel I have in a day.

I do not want to feel guilty about my choices. I want to tell my activist colleagues that I am stepping away but I don't want to lose my friends and connections. I want to "let" others carry the torch without me (they are doing that anyway). I want to be honest and say "I am maxed out. I have all I can handle right here, I won't be joining you" and I don't want to feel bad about it, but I do.

My intention is to allow myself to engage in social and political activism when and how it works for me and not feel guilty about my choices. I want to be honest with my colleagues and friends and not be afraid to disappoint. They have been nothing but gracious and supportive. It's all going to be okay.

Day 53 3411 (+198) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 123 (+11) deaths
Thursday April 30, 2020

Joe is continuing to struggle, not only with his ongoing and historic issues but he is smack dab in the middle of the most hard hit area of the state for the Coronavirus right now. I'm not sure he is really aware how significant this is. The city of Gallup is asking the governor for permission to use emergency powers to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Navajo Nation will be enforcing another weekend long curfew beginning tomorrow evening. There are more than 1,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases in McKinley County, versus Bernalillo County with just over 800 cases. The population comparison? McKinley County has about 71,000 residents, Bernalillo County has about 680,000 residents, almost ten times as many. Some patients from McKinley County with COVID-19 are being treated in Albuquerque area hospitals. McKinley County just doesn't have the capacity to take care of all of its COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Day 53 3513 (+102) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 131 (+8) deaths
Friday May 1, 2020

It's 9:30pm and 79 degrees outside. I just came in from the front porch. Charles and I sat out there a good long while, I sat out a little longer. OMG I have waited for this night for so many months. Beautiful, warm evening and a glass of wine on the porch, just how I imagined it. I love summer nights. Yes, the days are already getting hot and will get hotter but, with nights like this, I can't complain. It feels so good to feel so good.

Hey we are thinking of doing some bbq ing tomorrow for my birthday. Alicia's parents and my mom and Jerry are going to come. I don't know what you guys think about everything, but you are welcome to come if you would like. Or we can get together and do our own thing like we did for my dad's (birthday) and practice our social distancing. What would you guys rather do?

Alex's message yesterday made us think more about our commitment to our own and our community's safety through our fairly strict and physically isolating social distancing. To what degree will we continue as we are and for how long? We declined the BBQ but look forward to getting together with Alex and Alicia in a more socially distanced way.

As several other states have begun to relax stay-at-home orders and business closures, people here also seem ready for relaxed restrictions, to let down their guard a bit. We've experimented with it ourselves, though our "letting down our guard" looks pretty much like what the restrictions currently require. On Charles's birthday we had Alicia and Alex over for cake and coffee. They were on the patio 8-9 feet away from us on the porch. I have also recently had two enjoyable visits in the front yard with our neighbor, Betty. The first time we stood a distance apart but tonight we actually sat in chairs on the patio a good 6-8 feet apart. She kept her mask on.

I think it's appropriate to start to practice what safe socializing might look like for us, especially since we believe we will be doing this for an extended period of time. But, I think there is a danger in it, too. It would be easy to slip into old behaviors and routines because, whatever this is, it does not feel natural. Although, even as I say it, I realize that our quarantine routines are starting to feel natural because we've been doing them so long and they feel so safe. And, although I feel safe in our quarantine routines, I imagine it would be easy to abandon them too early. That is why we need to continue to double down and be slow and cautious as

we explore expanding our world. It is still early days, even though it feels like we've been doing this a long time. It's only been 50 days since New Mexico had its first confirmed Coronavirus cases. It's been just over 60 days since the United States had its first case of suspected community transmission. Again, we need to remind ourselves to stay the course. Let the young, the restless, and the less vulnerable blaze the trail.

Day 54 3732 (+219) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 139 (+8) deaths
Saturday May 2, 2020

Day 55 3850 (+118) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 151 (+12) deaths
Sunday May 3, 2020

The weekends are feeling like weekends again and it is all because of school, specifically home school. During the weekdays, Rowan watches the K-1 lessons on PBS from 8-9am. We do about an hour of home school later in the morning. This routine takes out the entire day until after lunch. Instead, on a Saturday or Sunday morning, we are free to do what we like. Today we took a picnic breakfast of chocolate cake, coffee, and apples to UNM for a walk and bike ride. The cake is made with whole wheat flour and somewhat reduced sugar so it seemed fair game for a special picnic breakfast. Later at home, Rowan discovered sea creatures diving in the kiddie pool while I read on the front porch and listened to her tales of discovery.


There are good times and beautiful moments in the midst of all this disruption. But the reality of our times; the disruption, the losses, and the grief, is sobering and sorrowful. I have found myself avoiding reading about the people who have died; their fear, the anguish and the grief of their family members. Those losses, those deaths, deserve to be acknowledged and to be mourned. I spent some time in the last couple of days and this morning reading about the lives of a few of those individuals. One of them, 28 year-old Valentina Blackhorse, is a member of the Navajo Nation, is Zalika's age and has a one-year-old daughter. I hesitate to use the past tense in describing her because she was alive just a "minute" ago. She became infected with the Coronavirus while caring for her companion who was infected. Another woman, about my age, was called Grandma Rocket by her family because of her seemingly boundless energy. She had recently moved in with a daughter and son-in-law to help them care for a new baby.

The pain people experience is not just limited to COVID-19 infection itself and caring for the severely ill and dying— there are the frontline workers, like Jessica, who are separated from their children and loved ones, there are millions who have lost their jobs and who are experiencing all the uncertainties that flow from not having enough money for rent and food, and, at the less severe end of the spectrum, there is us with our lives and routines disrupted but with a full pantry and no fear of losing our home.

I want to find a way to embrace the seriousness of this time in history while I savor the good times and beautiful moments that grace my life each day.

Day 56 4031 (+181) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 156 (+5) deaths
Monday May 4, 2020

It is Alex's 32nd birthday today. He delivered a card to *us* when he dropped off Carli this morning. We didn't have a card for him, just wishes for good health and a happy birthday.

The front of the card it read, "after every storm there is a RAINBOW". The back of the card read, "OUR MIRACLE IS DUE December 2020  Alex and Alicia"

I cried and cried and Charles did, too. Alicia told me that they are scared but so incredibly excited. We are also incredibly happy but we, too, are scared. I am more hopeful than scared, though.

Please, baby McCash, be healthy and grow strong. We love you. Your mom and dad are waiting for you, they have loved you forever, already.
Happy Birthday, Alex!

Day 57 4138 (+107) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 162 (+6) deaths
Tuesday May 5, 2020

We played a rousing game of UNO on the front porch during the heat of the day. Charles and I drank iced Chai. Rowan took delight in throwing +2 cards at us whenever she could. The game was full of “mean” plays, complete with iconic smirks and evil laughter. And, as UNO is wont to do, the game went on and on. The discard deck was reshuffled. We groaned. We drew another two cards or four and we were beginning to think the game would never end. I was torn between looking forward to the end and wanting the game to go on forever. As we played I could hear the occasional helicopter preparing for landing at UNMH, a grim reminder of the pandemic. Reminders are never far away.

In the laughter, and in the midst of the fun of the game, I was haunted by fleeting wisps of sadness. I refused it a firm grip. It was an afternoon that felt like summer vacation but it also reminded us of what we couldn't do. We couldn't go play in the fountains and playgrounds at Civic Plaza or anywhere else. We can't walk to our favorite restaurants anymore. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is no recognizable normal that we are returning to in the foreseeable future. We can make it as good as we can. We can notice and create beautiful moments and good times and that is important. But the truth is, life is forever changed and I can't wrap my head around it. This virus is not anywhere near done with us. Cases and deaths continue to rise. Reopening the economy is going to happen, if not little by little then in a step-wise, start and stop fashion. When it does, the virus will find footings large and small. And, as ever, we must constantly renew and revise our commitments to safety as best we can, given all that we do not know. Given all that is unknowable.

Day 58 4291 (+153) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 169 (+7) deaths
Wednesday May 6, 2020

Charles made a foray out into the world this morning to pick up row cover for the garden at Rehm's nursery and to recycle glass. To make the purchase at Rehm's, I called ahead to confirm they had what we wanted and paid for it over the phone. We procured a 10:15 a.m. pick up time. Charles, wearing his mask, drove to the alley behind the nursery and the purchase was brought out to him. Several other customers, who were also parked in the alley waiting for a pick up, were wearing masks as well. All the Rehm's employees wore masks.

After leaving Rehm's, Charles headed north on San Mateo and made a stop at the Big Lots on Menaul near San Mateo. Of all places, Big Lots is about the last place I would chose to go even in the best of times, not to mention now during a deadly pandemic while we are sheltering in place and not even going to the grocery store. I think I understand it, though. First of all, it was there and kind of on his way. Second, Charles really enjoys poking around and maybe finding a few fun goodies or bargains and I think he is getting a bit restless, too. Thirdly, there was “no one there”. Seemed like a safe bet for that reason alone, I imagine. He was cautious, though, even beyond checking that the store was virtually empty of customers. He wore his mask and gloves. At the cash register, he used disinfectant spray on his gloves and debit card. As he unloaded the cart at the car, he used Clorox wipes to sanitize all his purchases — the multi-colored caramel popcorn (a special treat for Rowan), antacid tablets, allergy pills, granola, a Crest tooth paste that he likes, three boxes of Ghirardelli Chocolate Caramel Turtle brownie mix and two boxes of Ghirardelli Double Chocolate brownie mix.

The nearest glass recycling to us was closed so he ventured out to the main site on Edith Blvd NE near Osuna. A truck with a lot of cardboard pulled in at about the same time but, other

than that, no one else was there. He also drove by the Lowe's hardware on 12th Street and I-40 just to "check it out". The parking lot was pretty full. He did not get out of the car.

At home Charles disinfected his shoes, changed his shirt and got a fresh mask. I was surprised to hear about the trip and, although I appreciated that he was not cavalier about it, it made me shake my head in amused puzzlement. He says that he won't be doing it again anytime soon. He mostly wanted to just see for himself how things are actually working out there. "Out there" is someplace we haven't actually been in almost two months.

**Day 59 4493 (+202) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 172 (+3) deaths
Thursday May 7, 2020**

52% of New Mexico's COVID-19 cases have been identified in McKinley and San Juan Counties.

54% of New Mexico's COVID-19 deaths have occurred in McKinley and San Juan Counties.

32% of New Mexico's COVID-19 cases have been identified in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties.

37% of New Mexico's COVID-19 deaths have occurred in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties.

In the state of New Mexico, 84% of cases and 91% of deaths from COVID-19 are occurring in just four counties.

Bernalillo and Sandoval County's number of cases and deaths roughly match what might be expected if case numbers were evenly distributed across the state. They have 39% of the state's population and have had 32% of the identified cases and 37% of the deaths.

San Juan and McKinley Counties present a very different picture. With just 9% of the state's population, they have suffered 52% of the state's cases and 54% of the COVID-19 deaths.

I wonder if people in counties with many fewer cases and deaths feel like the stay at home orders and business closures have been unfair to them or are they grateful to have been able to lock down before things escalated? Given what we've seen across the country, I am glad we locked down as soon as we did.

**Day 60 4673 (+180) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 181 (+9) deaths
Friday May 8, 2020**

This afternoon, Charles mentioned something about getting ready for the party. My eyebrows raised. Huh? What party?

We were expecting Jessica and Kris to come by this evening for a grocery drop. Charles was right. That is about as close to having a party or going to a party as we are going to get. And it does kind of feel like a party when they come. It feels a little like Christmas, too. Invariably, Jessica includes special, unexpected treats along with the food and supplies. We shared some time together with them on the patio, us on the porch. Tonight, Jessica had a Coors Light, I had a glass of red wine. The wind and slightly chilly temperatures put a bit of a damper on the evening but not much. I think we all appreciated the no-contact contact.

Tonight was extra special because Jessica and Kris brought Rowan's fish, Ghost, and Charles's brand spanking new bicycle that Kris had assembled for us. If you asked Charles and Rowan which of those things they thought was the best, you'd probably get different answers.

I was, again, amazed at all the food and supplies. Pre-COVID we were shopping often for fresh veggies and fruit, thinking only a day or a few days ahead. The co-op is a 15 minute walk from here, less than a mile away. Sprouts grocery is just over a mile. They are both so close we

put very few miles on the car even with shopping every couple or three days. Shopping like that requires very little in the way of advanced planning. If you want to try a new recipe and don't have the ingredients, you can just pop over to the store. Not anymore. If I don't have what I want, I just leave it out and maybe sub a different ingredient. If I can't adapt the recipe to fit what I have, I just don't do it. Jessica is shopping for us once every two or even three weeks. It's a huge change for all of us.

When we first moved here our pantry shelves were almost bare and they stayed that way a long time. Now our pantry shelves are overflowing. The chest freezer has more, much more, than just frozen peaches from our tree at the old house. And, since the only bread that I have found that I like from the store is from Trader Joe's and I don't shop there anymore, I have started baking bread again. I found an easy, basic, and delicious whole wheat bread recipe. I am using it, regularly.

**Day 61 4778 (+105) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 191 (+10) deaths
Saturday May 9, 2020**

**Day 62 4863 (+85) confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, 200 (+9) deaths
Sunday May 10, 2020**

Today is Mother's Day. I communicated with my grown kids through text messages, phone calls, and FaceTime. Alex stopped by in person to give me flowers. All of that was really nice and none of it felt particularly out of the ordinary despite these extraordinary times. Rowan is six-years-old and hasn't seen her mom in eight weeks. Her "Happy Mother's Day", through a FaceTime call, seemed, sadly, pretty ordinary, too.

I am glad that Rowan seems to be taking everything in stride. It is a really good thing. It would be overwhelming and damaging to constantly regret all that has changed. It just feels wrong somehow to feel okay, especially when I think of Rowan's mom, my daughter, spending the day without hers.