

Interviewee: Deborah Jorgenson

Interviewer: Bryson Wilkins

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Abstract:

Deborah Jorgenson lives in Frederic, Wisconsin, and currently owns a salon in Hudson, Wisconsin. In this interview, Deborah discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected her life, business, and family. She shares the struggles of owning a business in an affluent area during the lockdown and is concerned that if another lockdown comes in the winter she will have to shut down in Hudson for good. She also talks about how she's grown closer to her family during this time and is able to see them more often. She also touches on how it's frustrating that her business had to shut down while bigger businesses were able to remain open and had fewer restrictions.

Bryson Wilkins 0:01

This is an oral history for the Wisconsin COVID-19 archive project. The date is Sunday, December 5th, 2021. The number of confirmed cases and deaths for COVID-19 in the United States is 49 million confirmed cases and 788,000 deaths. Here in Wisconsin, there have been 997,000 confirmed cases and 10,000 deaths. State are the current statistics on the percentage of the US population that has been vaccinated is 75% of people five, end up with at least one shot in the US and 59% in Wisconsin. And if I could have you state your name and what you if you mind sharing your demographic information, such as race, ethnicity, age, and gender.

Deborah Jorgenson 0:50

My name is Deborah Jorgenson, my age is 44. My race is white, or Caucasian.

BW 0:59

And then, if I could have you describe what you do on a daily basis for, you know, work.

DJ 1:08

I'm self employed as a hairdresser, and I'm a full-time mom.

BW 1:17

And then where do you live? And what's it like to live there?

DJ 1:22

I live in northern Wisconsin, or rural area. And it's a very small town.

BW 1:30

When you first learn about COVID-19, what are your thoughts about it? And have your thoughts changed since then?

DJ 1:36

I had been hearing about it on the news, like to work in March and was at work and was hearing news that there was a possibility that my hair shop would be shut down? And my thoughts were, I have never been through something like this ever in my life. was super concerned.

BW 1:56

And, you know, how have your thoughts changed since then, you know, have you, you know, been less concerned about it?

DJ 2:02

So, in the beginning of when it first came out as a business owner, I was instill in super concerned, started reading up from all the different CDC [Center for Disease Control and Prevention] guidelines to being able to get reopen a small business in Wisconsin, and dealing with school districts are a school district. And what my kids had to go through was confusing, overwhelming. And I enjoyed actually being home with my kids and seeing the online process happen for this for my children and learning what the kids were being taught in school because we were in such a rat race prior. So busy and didn't have time to really juggle both, as best as we are now so.

BW 2:52

And as a business owner, what's it like to have all these you know, people that you don't know where they've been previously and you don't know if they have COVID or not, you know, what's that been like?

DJ 3:05

So when we first started back in the early stages of COVID, when we were first learning about it, I think my clients being in such a personal space, and having so many roles from having no children in the shop, to having one person at a time in the shop, and your client and being masked gloved and trying to keep my thoughts were we're trying to keep each of us safe from spreading it and getting it as the vaccination became more readily available. I found myself pinched to having to do it just because I didn't want to put others at risk, or myself or my elderly parents that lived close to me. And I knew this was going to be a long road.

BW 3:54

Now did you have any concerns about the vaccine at all?

DJ 4:00

So, I had severe concerns about the vaccine. I did it more as a pressure point because it was easier for me to follow the rules and to really step back and I didn't, it was easier for me to stay open and that affect others by doing it. I've also found it is a personal choice for all of my clients for anyone. I don't feel it's my right to have to say one way or another. I know I just had to do my part what I felt comfortable with. Secondly, I think what change through the process of COVID as we're facing, you know, over a year of this from vaccinating my children. I did not believe in that. I didn't feel that that represented from we did this to prevent our elderly and then as it became more readily I felt that the vaccination to all ages it just kept seeming to me like it became more of a political game than it became necessarily the numbers didn't matched to children, my younger kids, my 16 year old and my 14 year old. So, looking from a personal standpoint of my children, it's very hard to make a decision that we don't know, the data on the long-term effects that will have on them. Answering more to the question. Previously, I felt as though we've back in March, we were all fearful. And then spending the summer with your children being home school started, I was so thankful that my children were able to go back, I went back to work, obviously following CDC protocol and wanting the best for my children. And then November 2nd hit, and I felt they had closed down school. And I had chosen to do a hybrid option that was offered up here at Luck, Wisconsin, and it allowed us to, to send my kids two days a week to school, and keep them home Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It was smart, because it was also coming around to the holiday season. Obviously, with what I do for a living, it was easier for me to keep kind of my circle of, of outside outsiders, so be it away from my children, and kind of monitor if they were to be exposed to COVID. Who did it you know, where they get it? Can we keep them home you went from, you know, that tracing where if they were around somebody with COVID, they would be home for 14 days as well. What changed during that time is I started realizing from my clients to my children, they needed time with their family and to be home. And to have somebody look over what they were doing and reassure them. But the mental health of what was going on my daughter played sports during that time, which she did not do because she felt she couldn't play with a mask on. She felt she couldn't run, and her life was changing. If you want to put it in perspective, Vivian was a freshman in high school, when she got when COVID came in March. And she's now a junior and to think her whole high school career was spent with a mask or spent half, two days at school, her life as we knew it change huge. The extracurricular things, she needed the social standpoint with her friends, to her, it was going to be a new experience for all of us at it, some positive, some negative. But as far as the next round of COVID, what were experience same, and the different variants, I feel we have done our best to provide safety first, and educate our children, and let them have a voice in this unbelievable dynamic that we didn't ever see coming. I hope we will look back on this and think we've done our kids well, and we will learn from it. And that's all I guess. Yes.

BW 8:11

Now, have you had any issues with the ways maybe, you know, the school administration handled COVID and the ways that you know, the government's handled COVID?

DJ 8:22

So, from when I first came, I felt everybody, we all worked as one I have to be truthful. The online process for my two children was excellent. I think it could be the wave of the future as well as colleges. I found my children were so successful. They, my son, my daughter both did well with the education having a live stream of a classroom being virtual, and being able to go in two days to be able to talk to your teacher, if you felt he didn't understand how to do something, they had enough time to be able to do what they had to do. Looking back at it. Now, the numbers obviously were lower when we first had the COVID experience. And now that we're heading into our junior year, and seeing how high our numbers are, it kind of is backwards. How do you explain that? How do you explain that we tell you to get vaccinated, but the numbers we know it can still spread and we know but we aren't even doing trace contacting. Unfortunately, or fortunately for our school. They chose to keep it as long as there was federal funding coming to the busing systems. They had to wear their masks. But as far as at luck, currently, children do not wear masks, or they do not talk about being vaccinated. It's your choice. They didn't even offer it at the school for them to get vaccinated. There were clinics that were available in the summer that my children could have been vaccinated. I found that it was only available in our tiny area on Thursdays. But the one good thing that came out of it is, if you did want to get tested, they built this drive up set up that you could stay in your car, and easily and readily during working hours, get tested. And within 48 hours, they would give you the results at the beginning obviously was 70 Do then it became quicker. And it made it very easy for people to go in and, and see if they had COVID. But as far as the schooling and the curriculum and I, I have been a very passionate parent that would ask little board questions and wasn't afraid to try to understand what was going on here. We would have kids that would go to school with COVID. This new generation is different. They were sick of being locked up. They're tired. They went but opted to not get tested. Because they felt that the other than they didn't have severe signs. Yes, they had been asked the kids kind of took it in their, their hands to say whether or not by the time I found out I did ask the school district what is going on here. We didn't live feed the classroom anymore for this year. So, there was no way if you had COVID for Vivian zero right now, to be able to make up the schoolwork of Algebra Two, or history or whatever she was in junior year is a very tough year, or my son. They had no live feed. As I spoke to the school district, they said we dropped the ball, Debbie. I said well, don't you have the, the videos from last year that we could possibly just use to be able to teach, you know, the five days that we request to have them home. Unfortunately, it was so unorganized, they didn't, and they would encourage kids to come. They didn't do any more trace counting, contacting. So, it's just bizarre. I think the percentage for the children in our school is very low of how many had been vaccinated to the amount that happened. And I don't know what the future holds. I'm not an anti-vaxxer I would hope to God that there's something we can learn from all this and the good till the data proves more for me to feel comfortable I need to do what's best for my children. And obviously my clientele at work as a small business owner.

BW 12:27

Now, do you still implement masks at your business?

DJ 12:33

So being a private business, and in the state of Wisconsin, I wear a mask with all of my, my clients. As far as my clients go, I leave it up to what they feel the most comfortable. I would like to also state for the record that I put them first and myself meaning I would never ask if they were vaccinated. I would never I have been asked if they could see my card if I was vaccinated. And unfortunately for them, I responded with I if we've never asked about any other vaccinations, why do you feel comfortable asking me about mine. But I am vaccinated, and I did wear a mask and I did choose to leave it on them. I personally felt violated by it. I don't think that's the road that we need to go down. I do think that there should be obviously with the numbers being higher currently, and with the holidays and everything. I only take limited numbers of clients still from COVID. I still am hesitant to take people who have traveled out of the state, I am still hesitant to date people, children. I just am confused and one breath we shut down last year with lower numbers, and this year with the highest numbers we chose not to. So, I don't know what to say.

BW 14:04

Now, as a female business owner, have you seen your business be more impacted than maybe the businesses that surround you?

DJ 14:15

Great question. I actually think being a female small business owner in Hudson, Wisconsin. I found us smaller business owners downtown working together and we were definitely impacted. I would have bankers, I would have other, other business owners reach out and ask and give me advice. Whether it was PPP [Paycheck Protection Program], whether it was protocol, their numbers, we're all hurting, we're paying rent the federal government gave us money at the front end. But unfortunately, our rent didn't go down and the number of columns did, we're all hanging in there, we're all banding together, we all support each other. But unfortunately, I don't, this COVID pandemic affected all small business. And obviously, anybody bigger businesses as well. But as a small business owner, in a very expensive area, I found it was debilitating. And unfortunately, with the future, I'm hanging on by threads and hoping for a turnaround, and a straw with inflation. With the price of gas with the world today. I think all of us are holding on and waiting until we see what happens through the winter. And hopefully, by the summer I was shipping, I mean getting product just to get air color. You know, we were limited. We didn't know what we were getting at the next day. A prime example is I sell Prime Air product, I was fortunate I was able to get product in, but now are my clients who need to put food on the table for their kids, and paying for their colleges, or having extra people at your home because you didn't anticipate them being home for this duration, or them not working. You know, it affected so many layers of this onion that I don't know if we will ever see what we saw before you know, people went to work, and I did as well. I'm very proud. But this new world order I see fear. And that's been a long time where it's a perfect storm. I hope and I pray every day that we will see the

end of this. And hopefully, everybody will rise up from what we've been through and learn from it.

BW 16:43

Now, do you think the government could have did, you know, something different when the virus was initially?

DJ 16:49

Absolutely, I feel with small businesses, it was easier to tell us you could go into WalMart, but it was harder being told as a female business owner that we can go to work. Well, why would we allow a big conglomerate to be open to allow us to get our groceries. You know, I will say this, I've been ordering more online, I live in a small area, we cannot get fresh produce. We can't get product the way that bigger cities do. In fact, to be honest with you, I just heard somebody paid \$10 For cantaloupe. The reality is shit for us. Fortunately, it's banded us to be together and sit together and be united about how we feel. And as far as the government dealing with this pandemic, quite frankly, it was unorganized. If it wasn't for my clientele reaching out to me and telling me what I all qualify for. I would have had no idea and my accountant, you can't do everything. You can't wonder if you get a paycheck next week and wonder I have an accountant. She does all that. I didn't know what I was what was available for me to be quite frank with you. i I'm allowed to qualify for more things I felt to be truthful, I will be honest, I I never took the first PPPs and the reason being is there were people that needed it far bigger than me. But unfortunately, my accountant had called me and said I think it's time we applied for this last one. We just don't know what the future holds. If you get shut down again, Debbie, you got to be able to pay the rent to them to your lease and let's pray he can. Well, I think when you kind of look back at it now and seeing the numbers rise to be true, I thought we would be shut down by now was so confusing is still confusing. I think people are just tired of COVID They are coming in and grow droves and wanting to spend time with their family. We are social beings and we need to be able to see our loved ones. It has been one of the longest hardest, craziest rides. Fortunately when the two months had expired for me to be able to go back to work I did but even now I could go endless on you from the from highs canceling to they, they've been exposed to COVID or have COVID themselves that backs me up, you know seven days to try and it's it's, it's been horrific, debilitating, exhausting. On an average day I average 20 phone calls and text messages of different people and I'm one person I couldn't imagine what's going on in a bigger salon or anywhere. We just I just find people are very patient they're running out. They want to live life. They want to keep moving and they don't understand that. I need to keep my doors open for me to keep my doors open. I need to know if you've been you know traveling. If you have symptoms. Do I ask everybody that comes in fortunately, I knew my clientele for 20 plus years. So I've been lucky to be able to reach out and say, Hey, are you feeling okay? I, you know, and they've been super respectful and understanding through this process.

BW 20:07

Then have you or any of your clients had the Coronavirus?

DJ 20:12

Like I said, fortunately Yes, I had clients that are unfortunately, I had clients that did have COVID. In fact, currently I have a receptionist that works for me, we work together, she's my only partner at work that helps me she's like a personal assistant and her husband currently has scolded. And they both had all all vaccinations. Well, both vaccinations I should say. And as far as clients, yes, they also have had it, my children, we've been blessed. And no, and actually, I have not had it. I've been fortunate that I did get tested. Maybe, um, end of October, and I realized I, I had an upper respiratory infection, and a double ear infection that they were able to give me antibiotic for. But that was interesting, too, because I went through the drive thru tests waited my time found out on a Friday that I did not have it. And then the theory goes, how do you get into an ER, what do you want to do? Do I want to go into a hospital where I know they have COVID and being tested in our area. So, the nursing system online, I called in and I asked them, hey, this is the deal. I tested negative for COVID. And I don't really want to go in where you're, you're so bombarded and overwhelmed, but I, I have upper respiratory, a felted in your double ear infection in both ears. What can I do, and fortunately, they had an avenue and were able to, they offered me to, to first they said we're booked, they didn't have anything. And then I received a phone call about an hour later. And I said when I heard they were booked, I thought to myself, I might as well wait and go into the ER later in the evening hoping everybody who needs to be tested or was in there was already gone. And I could hit the are at, you know, middle of the night and just get my medicines for my ear. And I received a phone call within an hour of when they were trying to book me in the herd when I wanted. And were able to get me in to kind of a respiratory unit that only hosted four people in the whole unit. And they had me in and out of there in 10 minutes, I had no other than with the nurse and the doctor had no contact with anybody else. So, we were able to get my medicine and go from there. But in the current phases of COVID. I just had a client lose their father who was 90 Plus in a nursing home. It we know it's real. We know it's there. But unfortunately, we have a we have we know we need to work and figure out more solutions than that everybody put this blind trust into vaccinating. And I'm not saying that that isn't what's going to happen down the road. With all the different variants. I've just been overwhelmed and confused. I always wondered why we never got more vaccinations for the different variances. Makes no sense. So, we all are all three. Why didn't we get offered? To take now we're mixing all the vaccinations? And I thought often, why weren't we allowed to mix them? You know, right away? Wouldn't it make more sense. But until we spend more time, I guess in this and there are a lot of my clients that work for big businesses and aren't able to go into work. They aren't even talking about going into work until March three plays big companies in our area. And maybe it's a wave of the future. Maybe they will never go back in. Maybe they will only go two days a week. You know, the hybrid seemed to work for a lot, a lot of peace people and the big, big shell companies, those big buildings, it costs money to keep these things around. And as far as, as our shipping situations been an issue, everything has just been a little wonky. We have not been able to trust the government to get back up and getting this ran smoothly. I think the American people took it upon themselves to just keep waiting.

BW 24:23

And then do you have any thoughts on you know, maybe moving your business to your house?

DJ 24:30

Absolutely. My lease comes up this February and unfortunately, when the price knowing we don't, knowing the uncertainty of our future I have been speaking with other hairdressers and wondering if running a smaller business with cutting costs and getting things back to ground zero meaning my rent my product. You know, I found People work by the things that were so important prior to COVID. You know, when you are faced with putting me you know, food on the table, or, or buying shampoo, you're going to do what your kid needs first or yourself. Yes, I have considered opening up a hair shop at my home and cutting out the rent in the background. And the other reality is, we don't know if we're ever going to get shut down again. And quite frankly, I don't want the overhead. I'm, I'm in my early 444. And I'm worried about my next 20 years of working. I don't want to have what happened that March, being told to shut down and not know when you're coming back and stuck with all these leases, and the financial burdens and the fear, you know, fortunately, my husband was able to work during the process of COVID as an EMT, but imagine his late nights and hours. I guess I value family far more than I ever did prior. Not that I didn't I thought I did prior. But now when I got to spend time and was forced to be home, I enjoyed being home. Yes, I would like to see what I can do for my future and move my business back home and can remember what it was all about. To start with, we put so much pressure and I'm in the face of trying to tell my daughter what our future is going to look like and son, what their future is going to look like. And I guess I always encourage her to follow her dreams, follow her heart. But at the end of the day, you got to be happy and not overwhelmed and scared. I think, you know, I, looking back if you would have told me when I started out my industry, I'd be sitting here in the predicament we're in. I would have never ever imagined the whole world shut down. Yes, we're slowly getting back up. But everything's twice as much. Did I raise my prices from the time COVID started to now? I have not. I couldn't I didn't feel validated to be able to with the way of the world. My clients had been good to me, period. But I, I couldn't I still am overwhelmed. Often, I find myself going into work traveling and wanting, getting to work getting through a 12 hour day and coming back home an hour and 20 minutes later and saying to myself on the ride home. I don't know how I can keep sustaining this. This is so heavy. It's so much going on for everybody not just me from, from this sickness that elements and all of it has affected the mental health of everyone. And I think it's time it's okay to let some of it go.

BW 27:49

Now, what are your thoughts on this new Omicron Variant that is going around the news?

DJ 27:54

Yeah, I find that very interesting. I do find myself watching, watching. Not necessarily the evening news, but I find the new variant very interesting. We knew they were coming. I think we've all known COVID has been here this is just the release of COVID and knowing that the variants are coming sadly I have a big family and I had a nephew that lives down in Texas and was able to give us a warning that down in Texas about two weeks. I feel like they're about two to four weeks ahead of what we receive here up in Wisconsin and was able to get a heads up that hey, there's a new variant coming and it is locking down the hospitals I've learned last night in our tiny rural area, body or patients are being kept in the middle of the hallways yet we still go

about life and keep going to have we will have Christmas we will have Thanksgivings we will have all hopefully graduations and, and birthdays and whatever but I do find myself with the new variants. The seems to be more debilitating than the first.

BW 29:12

Now you said that you typically don't watch the evening news, you know where do you typically get your news sources from?

DJ 29:21

So, I like to read a lot. I do, do internet stuff here or there. But I, being a social butterfly and doing what I do for a living. I like to talk to people from my family kind of being spread out I have a niece and in Oregon. I have a ton of clientele. That is snowbirds, birds that go to Florida and kind of hearing what they've all been experiencing. You know being from a rural area but working in a little bigger city in northern Wisconsin here it's given me some, some different perspectives of other families of what they battled or what They went through obviously, we've heard horrific stories that we've heard a lot of positive stories, a lot of people who, who turn this around and are trying to do their best. But as far as the new variant, I think we should be more concerned, like any flu, or any flu shots, too. There's always going to be another variant. I think we've been smarter about washing our hands and trying to do the mask trying to do social distancing. Anything we could do to kind of prevent the spread is very big right now with the holidays.

BW 30:32

And then you also mentioned that you got the vaccine, you know, what was your process like in getting that? And did you have any, any side effects.

DJ 30:40

So, the very first time I received the Moderna vaccine, the very first shot I received was euphoric. Oddly, me and a 95 year old were the only two in our rural, rural area at the time, that received her shots that when I received my first shot, I had a sense of it sounds crazy, but euphoria, it was like, I felt so good. It was odd. When she came in, I don't know if it was nerves, and being afraid of injecting ourselves with this COVID. And the when she did the shot itself, that was easy for me to be able to get in and make an appointment in our small little town here to get an appointment for the Moderna. The first shot, actually the second shot, I received, I it did get me sick, I did feel sore soreness, and actually little sore arm, but didn't feel good for about two days. And then obviously from there hesitant on giving the third one currently, I'm kind of waiting out a little bit here just to see because I had my double ear infection didn't feel good. My nursing, and doctors had suggested that I wait until my immune system was a little stronger before I consider getting the, the third vaccination and whether or not I will do the the a different vaccination than Moderna. That is interesting. I don't know. From what I understand, I think we'll have to think about it. Obviously, seeing in this area with our numbers so high, how many people back to needed are still spreading it? Quite frankly, oddly, and this is just my experience. And I'm

not ignorant, but from my just little bit of facts. The children that are vaccinated in our area seem to be the ones that were getting COVID. And the ones that weren't my children seem to be the ones that they, they held strong. They just didn't they could have just been a fluke and a coincidence. I don't know what to say about it. But learning that I think I've learned over less than 30% of our student population in our areas vaccinated kind of goes to tell you something that I know of several students who have shared with me that their experience with COVID was, was horrific. So, we'll see where this leads us. I'm not anti- vaccinations, I'm actually pro, pro anything to stop the spread and create a positive environment for our kids.

BW 33:18

And then do you think Coronavirus is gonna keep going on and on? Or do you think that you don't want to it'll eventually stop?

DJ 33:27

You know, being, being a small-time business owner. I definitely think Coronavirus has been politicized, it's obviously helped the big 1% If you think about it from Amazon to Walmart during this phase, do I think obviously we're gonna get this engine started again. But the problem is, we don't have the workers were overwhelmed, the ones that are working are tired. And then as a mother and a small-time business owner and my husband who's been working unbelievable hours, we all are getting to the point where we're fed up, whether we're staying home, or whether we're going in and fighting the fight. It seems like it doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. I think it was a great divide, to get people to to hurt each other see bad things, you know, I never thought in a million years. I never lived through obviously was too young for polio and all that. But I know I asked my parents often when polio was going around what was that like? But that left a lot more people maimed. And obviously, they had to do what they had to do during that time. But times were also different. People had bigger families; people were home people farmed in our area. People don't anymore. Big businesses. You know, I was thinking about it. Nobody should have been making money off of other people's hurt. And that's all I'm saying. Whether it's on the vaccination side or whether it was on big businesses taking advantage of being open. We should have been Giving a lot more. I think of families that lost everything. I have good friends that both of them have not been working. I been blessed through it all to have the privilege, obviously, having close family or close friends that have gotten COVID. And, and seeing that it's a real disease. Yes, it's real. And there are people in lives that are affected every day by it. But unfortunately, there are people, and this is truly unfortunate, and I don't want to come off as negative. But you look at cancer, you look at heart disease, you look at, you know, pneumonia, influenza, you look at all the other things, how funny we focus on such, it's just crazy to me, I don't understand. I think we learned something we were running really fast. Think of when you went into a grocery store, when was the last time we ever would have considered them wiping down the keypads, the conveyor belts, all that in the front end, I was like COVID is the best thing, we can clean everything up, get everybody back up and fight the fight. Well, unfortunately, I think people got a taste of being home and realize we don't want to do the rat race. And I hope and pray every day, I can give advice to my kids on, we're going to learn it together one way or another, what the what the outcome is, and we'll learn from this hopefully, and, and from the good and the bad. But as far as the new variants, either, we're gonna see that coming for years to

come. And as far as vaccinating, obviously, I'm not the numbers are confusing to me. I think everybody's over it. We're all kind of like, are you what number command, we could get a statistic to match any of our theories. But I do think that our elderly, our children, we want to be able to have relationships with the with our grandkids with your grandkids. Hopefully in the future, we will, we will find a way to live with it.

BW 37:01

Now, you said you mentioned relationships, has your relationships with your immediate family gotten strengthened during the virus or maybe fallen apart or drifted away?

DJ 37:11

I like that question a lot. I actually, I would like to share something. And I won't obviously give names. But on a daily basis, I do hair and I see a lot of people that we share personal stories and our personal family time. As far as me personally and my family. We with holidays. I think everybody gets anxiety anyways, when you get together with family gets overwhelming. But I will say to you on the record, and you could take this with you. I learned from my experience of being asked whether I was vaccinated or not. I felt violated. I would never judge somebody Joyce, and I don't get that power. So, in our, my personal family, we've been blessed to not talk. We just don't talk about it. It's not my business, but our other families asking for them to be vaccinated before they come to the holidays. Are they asking for the testing before? Are they asking? Yes, it even got absurd. I had a client share with me she is in her late 80s and hosting holidays and shared with me that she couldn't be by any she was that fully vaccinated and shared with me. The political side of the vaccination meaning her son, she had two sons and one son was vaccinated and one wasn't. And unfortunately, she was in the middle of watching them fighting over them that wanted to be together for the holidays. And all she wanted to be do is spend time with both of them. So maybe she would have to split it up, or whatever. But I think it's a crazy time you know?

BW 38:58

Then you mentioned a lot of at home time, you know, what do you and your family do for fun when you are at home?

DJ 39:10

So, I'd like to kind of spend a minute on that. I think being a mother and have had been traveling so far to get to work three days a week, I was fortunate that my children at a little age had to learn and having my grandma my parents close by my kids always and I had an open relationship being able to communicate really well. from cell phones to, to our daily routine from eating supper to go over every night to we always made an effort with each other to kind of keep us posted. But as far as during COVID. One thing I learned is how resilient my children were. What we did as a family is, we work together there was a lot my son learned how to do laundry. He learned how to take garbage make his bed, we ran our home like it was going to school, there was nothing different. Truly, we actually had other parents and families. So, I did it. And how we

did it was this is kind of your job. This is what I expect during this frame, I find out that you guys didn't log in and do your work during the time period, we're going to have to parent that that's a problem. My kids just I've been blessed. They didn't give me the heck on that. And that's why it worked. We didn't have them sleeping till noon, we were fortunate. I actually had teachers that would be like, Debbie, they don't have to be out. I'm like, Hey, routine, routine, routine, we're really that worked for our family. And as far as what we did, during that time, we did games puzzles, we learned how to zoom, a whole group, we did a whole holiday, where we zoom the whole holiday with people from Africa, where, quite frankly, there was some advantages to that. We didn't feel stress. I think out of all of my siblings, being the youngest of five, I felt this burden, because of my parents living across town and elderly. I, we had a system we had food, we would my children included, we kept them away from my parents. And then I would deliver food and set it outside. And they were able to grab it and get you know, we adapted to the to the I guess some of the situations we were in. But did we get lonesome for people? Quite frankly, no. I think we my kids may be more than me. But I think we were able to communicate through phones and zooms and facetimes and, and kind of pick each other up when we were feeling down. Did I ever at once feel like I was a bad mom, I see a lot of my girlfriends felt that way, I think because nothing really changed. Because I was gone for so long. Other than they were home online during school, they still had to do the same amount of work. We didn't we didn't skip a beat. I will say one positive thing luck, Wisconsin had ran one of the best online programs I had ever experience. We are we would speak to other because we're in such a rural area and by little towns, other school districts mimic a lot of what they did, from teachers reaching out mentally, to to positivity, they just really were supportive. I think they ran a really good online program to be honest with you, I bet they received more students because of how well the program was, was ran on mine. But unfortunately the they dropped the ball, our school board to others with this online programming, you know, we live in the middle of nowhere, and we have families that drive quite a bit, it would have been nice to see some of them the program to stay and give parents the options and let with open enrollment as an option would allowed more students maybe that were struggling in person than they realize, but we will fortune with the new variants with, with COVID with families with everything going on. I think we hold on and wait and see what the next chapter just, is a whole lot of confusion, I feel like at times.

BW 43:14

Then you mentioned dropping food off for your parents. You know, has that changed since the beginning of the virus?

DJ 43:22

So, I think we I think everybody this summer was a little looser as far as meaning. You know, we were mass we drop it off. We've begun it. I was surprised with the meals that were being delivered during the school. You're in the front end by people masking and putting yes that has changed quite a bit. My parents are getting out a little more they're fully vaccinated and getting out and being able to do to go to church. That was important for them. Yes, they've learned how to work computer and we helped them but I kind of followed that 15-minute rule. And the first time we were very concerned, we just got through a holiday. I was able to go we ate together, and

we just left we didn't we didn't linger like we usually do. Obviously, we want to keep everybody safe and healthy.

BW 44:14

And then with you mentioned that you have had some health issues, you know, did that concern you in the viruses initially coming out?

DJ 44:25

I think I had I'll share that story with you. We went to I went to work that day. Under the weather saying to myself Hey, I didn't have a cough I could smell and taste. I still feel good. So, the person that helps me I was able to ask her Hey, I need you to cancel the rest of my day. That is something that I would say is change quite a bit since you know we would come hairdressers would come to work. Obviously, you didn't want to come to work say oh we did. You have hair is very important to people you don't like you're missing it Name on one hand, the number of days I ever missed work for being sick in 20 years. On one hand, one was 911. Oddly, I remember that that day. But other than that, I don't miss work. I don't get paid when I don't work. So, looking back at that, when I came into work that day, with the new protocols, you shouldn't go in, if you don't feel good athlete, I didn't have a headache. I just felt like I had kind of like a heavy chest, upper chest, and my ears just killed me. They just ached. So, um, I was one in and when the client came in, explained what was going on and gave them the right of refusal, we social distance, I have a fairly big shop and I was blessed to be able to say to them, Hey, I have, I think a couple of ear infections coming on both ears and very plugged. And then leaving here by noon. I'm willing to do you, if you'd like your hair cut by me, I will be masked, I will be gloved, I will do whatever you need to prevent this from getting to you. But unfortunately, if you're heading to Walmart, or target or any other store around here, I just was I felt obligated to tell them. And in my situation, they stayed with me. They didn't want to go anywhere. They messed up and said thank you for telling me Debbie. And I said if I did test positive for COVID It's good to be a minute because our area didn't have the 24 hours. I would let them know so that it could stop the spread but fortunately, I was negative. And like I said with the whole year stuff, but I will say where my clients fearful. Oddly, I bet a couple things I learned about COVID Until people habit or until you see someone you love habit. Most really are kinda like going about life I felt the people I'm around. But as far as living in fear, we experienced that too. We have a lot of clients who live in fear still, they, they say I'm one of their only outings ever go to. So obviously when you feel pressure of spreading are having COVID You feel it extra. I don't average a lot of clients anymore. You know, I'm about less than half of the clients I would take during this time. I don't work as late and I don't do as many because I don't want I still kind of weird about Trey's contacting and not wanting to spread it and being shut down so I've been blessed to be able to have an open relationship with them where I think we need to be able to trust each other though so it does.

BW 47:55

When stuff was hitting the fan, you know, did you have a plan B for if your business was permanently shut down?

DJ 48:02

That's really interesting too. Yes, I just happen to be in a situation that my husband was an EMT for an ambulance service out of the cities that he was so busy, but my plan B and is still Plan B is I needed to be able to live on the income and re budget my income could I think one thing we did learn about COVID is we could live on one income we didn't get all the things that things don't matter even to my children the things you weren't even went back to school was coming school supplies to clothes was a big deal. They didn't want them they didn't need them. They can realize it didn't eat much and if your person sitting next to you didn't need it. He didn't think about it. So fortunately, we were blessed to be able to kind of hold on with one income if we had to we could do it at um I don't know we didn't spend any big purchases during that time either. I think we were pretty much set I can we make this work. Looking back to when I was growing up with five siblings, you know you stretch stuff to go into the store last I ordered stuff online quite a bit. And still every day my husband teases me that we have a delivery every day coming to the front door that when something doesn't get delivered, we're often wondering what the heck but I do think that I do have a plan B in mind is to move my either business back home cut the costs of my leasing agreement or be home be a mom. I haven't been able to see my daughter play a sport or my son go hunting for the first time or spend time just listening to um, so out of all the negative that came out of COVID There were some positive. Now I try to look at the glass half full right out and I'm gonna say this is I got lucky and I know there were a lot of families that kids struggled through the process of online do. We just didn't have those problems, really, we didn't affect to be truthful. I think we were an example of how you can get it done. Online, I think actually opened avenues for my daughter and son to know that if they had to take an online course at school, they are scared. But you know, that generation coming is a far more computer savvy, in general, and, honestly, I kinda liked living through their eyes, their experiences and seeing their perspective of COVID. They asked a lot of questions, they research a ton and in fact, to be truthful, I think often we don't we, we say a lot of things about the youth. But we don't often say enough about how resilient how brilliant, and how incredibly thoughtful they can be. You hear on the news, all these other stories, I'm telling you, they banded together, they were FaceTiming. Together, imagine if your social experience from your freshman year to your junior year was all online. You know, I guess there was a reason they were always buried in the phone. Those kids know how to work of better and faster and quicker than all of us. And I think we fear often change. And sometimes you got to embrace it. I think we are dropping the ball by Matt embracing some of the changes that are coming our way. And whether we like it or not, I think it will permanently stay. I think there are a lot of people who did hit COVID and are going to be blessed to be able to be home and learn it. The biggest thing I learned out of COVID is I could live I could survive, and I could raise a family. Fortunately, Bob was working. Even my girlfriend's who aren't working. We live in a poverty area. And even the ones that aren't working are making it we all banded together and helped each other out. But I will tell you, she's making it you know?

BW 51:57

Well, thank you so much for adding to the archive. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

DJ 52:02

I think this is going to be great for hopefully future use and I really want to say this brace and I I was able to go down memory lane and kinda chronologically think about what, what the experience was like and I would like you to know that. Hopefully it helps and we can learn from this and get a positive, you know, outcome from what's happening in the world today.