

A Quiet Workplace

I work for a credit union, and I permanently work from my home office. I worked from my home office before COVID started. Prior to the lockdown, I would go into the credit union's main office one a month for meetings and spend the day doing my normal job along with the rest of the in-person staff. It always struck me how much louder the main office situation was compared to my quiet home office. There was a training room next to my desk that allowed me to hear folks jabbering away all day long, I could make out people laughing in the next area over from my department, and I would pick out my coworker's phone conversations in the background. It was also fun to chit chat with real humans as a change of pace to my lonesome home office. My wife's job required her to remain going into her physical workplace during the major lockdown period and we do not have children, so my daily life was not really impacted by the pandemic. The internet was full of stories on how the lockdown was changing everyone's lives, and I did not have that same experience. One day during the lockdown period I needed to come into our main office to get my laptop replaced. The place was a ghost town. The lone security guard took my temperature and handed me a mask. This was the first time I felt something different was happening. I spent the entire workday in the main office, and I was the only person on the entire floor. It was as quiet as a tomb, and it was a very eerie feeling. It was very unnatural to experience the silence and aloneness in a place that I normally knew to be so full of noise and life.