

I've never viewed gas stations as a place of cleanliness. I feel like whenever I go to get gas, I always want to pick the pump that is the farthest away from everyone so I don't have to put a mask on or even have to worry about keeping my eye on someone that's near me. It always happens without fail that someone always decides to park near me and I immediately get stares when I go to put my mask on.

My relationship with grocery stores has changed over the pandemic years. I remember at the beginning of the pandemic that my fiance and I would always wipe down our groceries when we got home from the store or even do the silliest thing like taking a whole shower afterwards. Meanwhile, if I go to the grocery store now, no one is wearing a mask besides myself. It's hard to navigate the isles of maskless people while shopping, even though I never thought of the grocery store like a mud covered trench that I had to trek through just to get bread.

Since the pandemic, I've had numerous nights of me being on my phone searching the internet for a reliable job that offered me a livable wage in Virginia. Ever since I quit my previous job, it came to my attention that not a lot of directors care about the safety and wellness of their employees. There also aren't a lot of jobs that I seem to be qualified for or don't have anything to do with history which is incredibly annoying.

I've spent so much money on hand sanitizers that I should probably buy some stock. It is amazing how often I use hand sanitizer after every time I leave my car or house. It also baffles me that we have to put up "how to wash your hands" signs everywhere because that's how people should've been washing their hands to begin with. I also can't stand the fact of shaking someone's hand anymore because I haven't a clue where they have been! Why is hand shaking a common greeting anyways?

Social media has made me judge more people because of the fact that people think it's okay to go out and go to bars or festivals. People on TikTok are doing Get Ready With Me and all I can think is "get ready to go where?" My relationship with the outside world has changed because I feel like I'm the only one who is caring about my health and safety. Being inside with a bunch of maskless people in a small room doesn't sound like fun to me now that there's a pandemic. I used to go out all the time in college and with my fiance, but now, dinner dates are usually at our home inside with just the two of us.

The future I have envisioned for myself has definitely changed over time. A lot of time during quarantine was spent on what exactly I want to do with my life. I'm glad I went and applied to be in a MA program. Searching for a job is still and always on my mind. My relationship with job security has changed a lot since the start of the pandemic. I had a job at the beginning of it, however, that job didn't really work out. Now, I feel like I'm asking too much from my future employers by asking for health insurance and a livable wage. I do believe I wouldn't be asking these questions if I wasn't getting another degree.