

Reflecting on Quarantine

Adjusting to the outbreak of the Pandemic was not easy for anyone. It seemed like, in the blink of an eye, everything we knew as normal was gone. Everything we knew as routine was gone. As things started to shift, it became more clear just how many different aspects of our society would be affected. Today I would like to focus on my initial observations of the major shift in how our society functioned socially. We are a very social society that relies on contact with strangers in a public space. This is true for all of us, every day. We must socialize with others in some capacity to be able to function in modern society.

I don't think I will ever forget the moment I truly felt the shift in the way our very social society started to transition to something new. Completely desensitized to how social of a culture we live in, I was completely shocked one day when I stopped at the grocery store on the way home. I live in Florida. We are used to prepping for storms, which often means running to the grocery store in a panic to stock up on water, toilet paper, and other necessities. This was my goal of stopping on the way home. This was when people weren't all necessarily wearing masks everywhere. I walked into the grocery store honestly shocked by the sight of so many face masks. I was wearing one.. I was fully supportive of the need for masks, but it seemed like overnight I suddenly could no longer see the faces of those around me. This was jarring. As I made my way through the grocery store, certain rows were one way only to stop customers from walking too close to one another. Customers were advised to keep social distance, and to not touch products they weren't guaranteed to purchase. I even witnessed angry customers opposing these rules set by the employees and getting really upset. Some customers were buying more than they needed of supplies, thinking of only themselves. Others were helping their fellow customers find what they need, trying to support complete strangers.

This is just the first time I felt this shift. As masks, social distance, and other changes became commonplace, this new world didn't seem so strange. We found new ways to be kind to others, we learned to smile with our eyes, not just our mouths, we adapted. Through my own experiences and on the internet, seeing the way different people adjusted, or didn't, was fascinating. In some cases, I was pained by seeing the reality of the coldness of our society. How selfish some people could be even at such a terrible time. In others though, my heart was warmed by the selfishness some showed. Neighbors helping neighbors. Strangers helping strangers.

This was just one example I shared today of watching society adapt to Covid-19. I don't think any of us will ever forget watching our local environment change, then watching via the internet or tv how the rest of the world changed around us. Overall, of course, the pandemic has been a terrible thing to experience. Countless lives lost, and families broken. My hope is that those of us who have survived it together learned something about ourselves. I hope we learned something not just about ourselves, but about our loved ones, strangers, and our entire community. This is a time that will make history books, and we are living it. I hope to be a part of the positive record. A part of the people who adapted and supported their fellow man through a world wide tragedy. Where will our stance through the pandemic fall in history?

