

Transcript of Interview with Trenton Hulisz by Joseph Rowan

Interviewee: Trenton Hulisz

Interviewer: Joseph Rowan

Date: 11/01/2021

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Joseph Rowan interviews Trenton Hulisz, a graduate from the University of Toledo, OH. During this interview, the two discuss the initial covid timeline beginning in spring break of 2020 and how it evolved and impacted their lives. They further comment on life during lockdown and how their college experience changed from in class to fully online. Lastly, they talk about ways they stayed busy during COVID times and how they navigated social distancing challenges and its effects on their friends and family.

Joseph Rowan 00:01

What is your name?

Trenton Hulisz 00:03

My name is Trenton coolish.

Joseph Rowan 00:05

What is your occupation?

Trenton Hulisz 00:06

I'm currently a package handler at FedEx and Perrysburg.

Joseph Rowan 00:09

Where did you go to school?

Trenton Hulisz 00:12

Like high school or college?

Joseph Rowan 00:14

College

Trenton Hulisz 00:15

College? I went to University of Toledo.

Joseph Rowan 00:17

Do you verbally consent that you agree that your interview will be made public? made available to the public immediately?

Trenton Hulisz 00:24

Yes.

Joseph Rowan 00:25

What was your initial reaction to the COVID 19 pandemic?

Trenton Hulisz 00:29

Um, I did not think it was going to last very long at all. I remember, I was actually talking to people, people that I knew and people that I didn't know, really, and I was asking them, and they all seem to think it was going to last about as long as it actually did. But me I was like, Oh, it'll be it started in like, what February, April was when the pandemic really started. And I was like, Oh, it'll be over by June. And then June came, and we weren't even close to a vaccine. And I went, Oh, no, this is gonna go on for a lot longer. So my initial reaction, I didn't think it was an issue.

Joseph Rowan 01:01

Okay, did you think it was going to be something along the lines of like, the flu like flu season?

Trenton Hulisz 01:06

Uh, I knew like symptom wise, it was gonna be a lot worse than the flu. As for like, transmission wise, I didn't think that it was. I quite honestly didn't know what to think whether it was going to be more or less easy to get than the flu. But I knew that I personally wasn't too concerned about getting it.

Joseph Rowan 01:31

Where did you first hear about the COVID 19 Virus?

Trenton Hulisz 01:38

I think Facebook, um, Facebook, or because it was about that time that I started really, like laying off of social media. So it was either through Facebook or through like, people that I was working with that I heard about COVID.

Joseph Rowan 01:51

Yeah, no, I first heard it through my sister.

Trenton Hulisz 01:53

Yeah.

Joseph Rowan 01:53

And then you started seeing everything on social media kind of pile up. What was your reaction to the University of Toledo shutting down during spring break?

Trenton Hulisz 02:04

That so I felt that it took a little bit too long to happen. But when it did happen, it came out of left field, if that makes sense. Like it wasn't happening. And so nobody thought it was going to happen. And then it just happened. And we all went, Oh, this is okay. We just have to deal with this now.

Joseph Rowan 02:21

Yeah, I remember they said that, like, we were not coming back from spring break just for a couple of days. And then they were like, here, you're not coming back at all.

Trenton Hulisz 02:30

Yeah.

Joseph Rowan 02:31

And it was like one case in Lucas County, I think that they had at that time.

Trenton Hulisz 02:37

It was something in that area. And I remember I had no idea how my classes were going to work. Because so many of my classes revolved around person to person interaction, I actually had at least two or three classes have to completely either redo assignments or drop assignments completely, because they just couldn't be done during the COVID pandemic.

Joseph Rowan 02:55

Yeah. And what what do you go to school for?

Trenton Hulisz 02:57

I went to school for psychology. And at the time, most of my classes were about person to person interaction. So I remember in my meditation class, it was mindfulness and meditative practices with Dr. Bullock. And I remember like three, maybe maybe less than three weeks beforehand, we literally had an exercise where people were holding hands and like, within like two feet of each other. And in a, in my, oh god, forgive me, I came up with the class was, but uh, it was taught by mon Malik. And she was a she was a grad student, I believe. And she had us all huddled up in small groups together groups of like three and so like classmates, like 30 people, groups of three, you all got to sit close together. So I thought that was that was interesting, for sure.

Joseph Rowan 03:44

Did you experience like any of the changes like of in person learning? Or were you only online until you graduated?

Trenton Hulisz 03:51

Um, what do you mean? Like, once we ended up going back to camp.. campus? Did I, like choose to stay totally online? Or what do you mean?

Joseph Rowan 04:02

Yeah, so you can like you could have chose to stay online. They have a lot of online options. But did you ever have like a class that where you went back into the classroom?

Trenton Hulisz 04:11

Yeah, actually. So I noticed that because at that point, I think when the school did back open up, like next year, a lot of the I think all the classes had to have an option to be online. And there was only two classes that I felt was necessary for me to go into class. But I think for the rest of the like, year there I spent the majority of my time learning from home.

Joseph Rowan 04:42

Yeah, and what were some of those changes made the in person classes that you can remember remember?

Trenton Hulisz 04:47

what were the changes made? They did in person? Well, first of all, there was no requirements to go interact with people. No, requiring you to go out into public. Um, There was definitely seating changes. And I thought it was funny because me personally, I'm an introverted person. So I don't like sitting next to people originally. But I always noticed, like, when I started college, you know, I'd always sit by myself, and I'd see groups of people sitting together. But after the COVID thing, everyone was sitting apart from each other. And I thought that was wild, because that just didn't happen until then. But yeah, so the two big changes, I noticed were seating. And no, like, assignments that require you to actually be out in public. I also noticed that, for a lot of people, they had a harder time learning and completing assignments on time, but me I didn't seem to impact my learning or assignments on time at all.

Joseph Rowan 05:53

Yeah, what was your like? How did you feel about the change from in person to online?

Trenton Hulisz 05:59

Like, was it easier or harder for me?

Joseph Rowan 06:01

Yeah,

Trenton Hulisz 06:01

it was easier to graduate, but harder for me to learn anything, if that makes any sense?

Joseph Rowan 06:07

No, completely, because I remember doing it and you're like, Oh, these assignments are really easy. But am I really sticking any of this information in my head?

Trenton Hulisz 06:15

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I, it's strange, because you'd think that the first two years of my college would have been more of a blur for me, but I actually recalled much more information from those first two years than the last two years of college. Because I felt like I was in person learning more when I was in person, but like, over online, like, I noticed I was spacing out a lot more. But being online, it's easier to, you know, look at your notes while you're taking the test, you know?

Joseph Rowan 06:45

Did you really? like, obviously, there's a difference between online and in person learning. Like we just talked about with the like sticking out information, and you can kind of use your notes. Did you like, really feel any difference in what you're getting taught? Like, was there a difference in the content that you're learning?

Trenton Hulisz 07:04

Not that I recall, necessarily. Um, I, I feel like the teachers were a lot more or the professors were a lot more patient with the students. And we're understanding that it's a very stressful time for all of us. So they weren't trying to get as much information in our heads. But I wouldn't say that the content necessarily changed, if that makes any sense.

Joseph Rowan 07:29

Yeah, I understand. Like, they're teaching the same things, but they're just being more lenient. Yeah. And they're being more understanding. Did it, like affect your grades at all? Like, did online schooling affect your grades or how you learned?

Trenton Hulisz 07:46

I don't want to say that it necessarily affected my grade. But I think that this is a hard question to answer, because the classes that I took near the end of my college career were far different with the classes I took at the beginning of my college career. And every semester, I always had like, A's and B's, but there was always one class that I had a C in. But I did notice that during the last two semesters, my last two semesters there, I didn't have any classes that I had a C in. So yes, it impacted my grade, but not so much that I really noticed.

Joseph Rowan 08:27

Yeah, I remember when it first happened that semester, where spring break, happened, my grades went down. But that's because teachers offered like, you do these two assignments you get a A, you do one you get a B, or you do nothing and you'll get a C.

Trenton Hulisz 08:42

Oh, that's interesting.

Joseph Rowan 08:43

Yeah. And so I was like, well, I'll just do the easy thing. Get a C. How did you keep yourself busy during quarantine?

Trenton Hulisz 08:51

How do I keep myself busy? I'm not the recommended safe way. I still interact with individuals. I would, I would break quarantine, very, very occasionally, like probably no more than once every two weeks just to hang out with one person or a group of people who I knew hadn't been exposed to anyone. Unfortunately, I still had to work in fast food. So that was a great way that I kept myself busy. A lot of sitting in doors, playing video games. And the thing is, you know, when school suddenly doesn't require you to learn any more, it requires you to just get the tests Correct. I didn't spend as much time studying. So a grand majority of my time in quarantine was just playing video games or breaking quarantine to hang out with my friends.

Joseph Rowan 09:43

Yeah, and speaking of like, hanging out with friends, I think it's kind of a younger person thing, since we were like 20, 21, 22 that we often broke quarantine to hang out with people. And did that affect your safety during quarantine or How did you feel like did you feel safe during or COVID,

Trenton Hulisz 10:03

I felt only as safe as I suppose the better way to put it is, I only felt safe when I was around people who I trusted. Like my mother, for example, I was living with my mother for the last is my third year at University of Toledo. I was living with my mother still, and there were nights where like, I'd be like, Hey, Mom, I'm going, I'm going for a drive or, you know, I'm going to get food, or I'm going to hang out with this person or that person. And when I would say, I'm going to hang out with this person, or that person, she seemed very upset and disappointed in me. Whenever I said, you know, I'm going out for a drive, it was alright, well bring a mask with you in case you get pulled over. And the last thing was even going out to like fast food, you know, I wouldn't do that. If I was you, Trenton. I'd be like, why? And she goes, because you'll get COVID to the drive thru. And I never believed that for a second. So I think I felt safe only around people that I trusted.

Joseph Rowan 11:03

Yeah, I feel like that that was a lot of the opinion of like, a lot of people, you only trust the people who are kind of safe with themselves. And also, who would keep you updated on if they had symptoms or anything.

Trenton Hulisz 11:15

Yeah, and I actually, so one of the people that I would typically go hang out with the most at the time was someone who had a slight form of an autoimmune disorder. So you know, if she got sick, she was sick. And given that I didn't see her get sick once during the entire to the pandemic. You know, I felt super comfortable around her. And it's actually very funny, because this individual, she didn't catch COVID once, right, and like we we both broke quarantine quite a few times. And now it is, what two years, two and a half years,

Joseph Rowan 11:49

Something like that.

Trenton Hulisz 11:50

Um, and she got the vaccine months ago. Last month she got she got diagnosed with COVID. So it's funny how these things happen, you know?

Joseph Rowan 12:00

Yeah, I got I was one of the first rounds of people who got the shot. And I broke quarantine a lot of times, because I was dating and a lot like that. And I had a lot of friends. And I ended up getting COVID after not interacting with anyone I was home, and I got it from my girlfriend, getting it at their work. And it just it's like, okay, you do everything and you're doing everything right. And then boom, you get it for no reason.

Trenton Hulisz 12:31

Um, question before we continue this any further? Is there going to be a question in this where you asked me if I'm vaccinated currently?

Joseph Rowan 12:39

No.

Trenton Hulisz 12:39

Okay, cool. So that will say this now. Um, so it is what is it November 1, November 1 2021, I am still not vaccinated, not because I don't trust the vaccine, but because I am too lazy to set up an appointment to get the vaccine. And it has been, like I said, two, two and a half years since the pandemic started and I still haven't caught the virus. And if I have, I had symptoms so minor that I didn't even notice.

Joseph Rowan 13:07

How How well do you follow guidelines, like the mask mandate and stuff,

Trenton Hulisz 13:11

um, I, I only follow the mask mandate, if I'm going in a place by myself, or if I know it's going to be a very crowded place. But if I'm going into a building with someone else, and that person isn't

wearing a mask, there's no point in me wearing a mask, because if they're going to catch it, and then I'm going to catch it 15 minutes later after we leave the store. And we're both maskless. So when I'm like running into a gas station real quick, or if I'm doing you know very, very quick grocery shopping. I won't wear a mask when I'm going into work. I won't wear a mask but like I said, if I'm going into a crowded venue, or anything along those lines, I'll typically try and wear a mask.

Joseph Rowan 13:51

How did well we kind of talked about being introverted. I know me and you both play a lot of video games. We are kind of homebodies like you're here with your boyfriend all the time. And you're pretty much just work school. Back in the day your work school come back here. Did COVID affect your daily routine at all?

Trenton Hulisz 14:11

not in the slightest. No, I'm not not at all actually, uh, like I said, there was a few times where I would you know, leave to hang out with a group of friends but I actually just to like a testament to exactly how introverted I am. I used COVID as an excuse to hang out with people less than less. And now it's at a point where I'm completely homebound. I don't leave my apartment, unless it's to get groceries or to go to work or if I'm going on a date with my boyfriend, you know if we're going to a walk in the park or something like that. And I know two years ago, like I was hanging out with people twice a week three times a week, large groups now it's doesn't happen like that.

Joseph Rowan 14:58

Yeah, I feel like the same thing. And with me because it's, you know, it gives you an excuse. You're like, oh COVID. But now that it's starting to wind down, you're like, oh, man, I'm running out of excuses.

Trenton Hulisz 15:09

Exactly, it is very hard. But I also feel like in these past two years, it has. I've already like, I don't want to say ruin somebody's friendships by having no interaction with them. But it's less people are asking me because they know like, when there's no point in asking him at this point.

Joseph Rowan 15:29

you already talked about kind of your mom's reaction to COVID. With the don't go, make sure you wear a mask during, like at a drive thru and if you get pulled over. How did your kind of your community or your friends or your family react respond to the pandemic, you kind of talked a little bit about it with the kind of breaking quarantine.

Trenton Hulisz 15:48

to go into more detail on that. So my mother was very, very adamant about not breaking quarantine at all. And since then her opinion, as well as the opinion of the grand majority, my family has done a complete 180 I don't really keep in great contact with many of them anymore, but they hardly wear masks. Anytime we hang out together, we don't wear a mask I've had my mother and my grandmother told me numerous times, you probably shouldn't get the vaccine Trenton. And because you know, they don't You don't know what you're being put in that vaccine or, you know, it's unconstitutional to make you take a vaccine and whatever political reasons they have. And I think that's an interesting take for them, especially since they were so scared of the virus initially, that now they don't care by taking any precautions from it. And I think, as a same opinion with the grand majority of my friends, at the beginning, we were all kind of unsure or horrified a little bit. But as we've seen it continue. There's been less and less of that, I guess, global fear, and it's more like and won't happen to me. And it's interesting, because I know, people that haven't been hospitalized, I haven't been killed, none of that from COVID, you know, the most my friends or family have had is sniffing bad cough. But I know people who have had very close loved ones to them die. But like, I don't know, anyone that's died personally. So I think me and a lot of other people have that same opinion of in the beginning, we were all afraid. But now it's like there's no point in being afraid anymore. We have this invincibility complex as a youth.

Joseph Rowan 17:31

Yeah, I know you wanted to go to graduate school. And you kind of like took a year off or so what the COVID kind of influenced that decision at all?

Trenton Hulisz 17:44

No, actually, my decision on deciding not to go to graduate school was influenced directly on, I suppose, my realization or coming of a realization that I'm not sure that I want to continue a career in psychology. I will say this, though. So not necessarily tied to continuing my education, but continuing my career.

Trenton Hulisz 18:13

A big reason why I didn't want to like immediately after I graduated, I didn't want to start any internships, the reason why I didn't want to look for any sort of job with my degree was because it was because I knew that whatever I did, whenever I worked with a client, it was going to be virtual. And while I didn't receive any formal training in my undergrad program, we were still taught many skills used for in person therapy. And I didn't want to have to learn how to do therapy, virtually. And then once we eventually make the shifts out of COVID, back into the real world where we can do it in person, I wasn't prepared for that. So to shorten this answer a lot. The COVID Scare did not influence my opinion on graduate school, but it did heavily influenced my career, if that makes any sense.

Joseph Rowan 18:13

Yeah.

Joseph Rowan 19:07

Yeah that makes a lot of sense. Since I'm a teaching major, a lot of people have decided to either dropped out or they couldn't handle, like I taught online through a computer. They couldn't handle that. Yeah, it's as hard as intimidating. It very is and now that we're in person, and my classes are my school doesn't have a mandate that I'm teaching it. It's kind of like easier you're you're a lot more free to do stuff and outs of freedoms of real big word, but for what do you miss most about pre COVID life?

Trenton Hulisz 19:38

Um, the most about pre COVID life? I guess. Honestly, while I didn't go to a lot of them, concerts, going to shows and just being absolutely reckless and being able to be in a room of 50 plus people and not have to worry about okay, am I gonna have to take Two weeks off of work after this, you know, like, oh, am I gonna have to risk going to a hospital because I wanted to go see, so and so band, you know, Mumford and Sons or something like that. So I would say like, while like, like I said, not having much of a life before COVID anyways, I appreciated the ability to have a leg to begin with, you know, it's, um, I guess. Like, another really good example would be if I if I went bald, you know, if I suddenly went completely bald today, like genetically wise,

Joseph Rowan 19:38

yeah.

Trenton Hulisz 19:38

Um, while I didn't ever grow my hair out as long as I possibly could and dyed my hair and everything like that, I at least appreciate now that I have the opportunity to do that. That's how I feel about COVID life. Like, while I didn't do much, I at least had the opportunity to do what I wanted to do. Now I feel like what I can do is strictly limited to when, like, how risky the situation is.

Joseph Rowan 21:05

yeah. Would you get vaccinated to go to a concert because I'm vaccinated fully, and I was able to go see a concert, because everyone there was vaccinated. Would you do that?

Trenton Hulisz 21:16

Yeah, absolutely. And I don't like I think I told you this earlier that I'm not not vaccinated, because of any political reasons, or fear of what's in the vaccine or anything like that. I've just been too lazy. So yes, absolutely. If I had a concert coming up that I really wanted to go to in, like, a month and a half, I think that's enough time, because it's, it's a whole month, two shots. So I think, yeah, if there was a concert coming up in a month and a half, yeah, I would get vaccinated today. But the issue is, there's nothing really pushing me to go get that vaccine right now. Like, if my job were suddenly like, hey, Trenton, we need you to be vaccinated to come into work, I'd be like, Okay, give me give me a month, I'll be in, I swear. But right now, it's like, because the mask mandate is so lenient, and there's no one, like, checking for vaccination cards everywhere you go, it's not really a top priority for me.

Joseph Rowan 22:17

Do you have any more comments that you want to?

Trenton Hulisz 22:20

Um, no, I mean, I like personally, I'd be curious to see what a lot of other people's opinions are on this. Because I know, like I said, I was actually talking to you about this before the interview started, how there's a difference in anonymity, like when people are given the opportunity to respond to questions in an anonymous setting, they're willing to speak more freely on a subject without feeling judged. But when people around either people they recognize or people who have the potentially potential to recognize them in the future, people are willing to more say something that follows the status quo. So I'd be interested to see what my friends and family say about this pandemic. In an anonymous sense, like they think it's anonymous, but I know who they are.

Joseph Rowan 23:10

Yeah.

Trenton Hulisz 23:11

You know, like, I want to know their true opinions on it. Not the opinions that they feel they have to tell to not be socially ostracized.

Joseph Rowan 23:18

Yeah. Thank you.

00:23:21