

Remembering Society's Humanity

By: Sara Levine

The Covid-19 pandemic was and continues to be a tumultuous time for many of us. At best, people were able to maintain jobs and a personal sense of security while watching the world surrounding them change. At worst, people experienced total upheaval and loss. My experience lies somewhere in the middle—my world has utterly changed. I am able to find the beauty in the midst of the chaos, but I still often struggle to find our society's humanity.

At the beginning of the pandemic I lost my job, like so many others, and with that loss, a huge part of my identity and purpose was lost as well. However, that loss of structure and identity brought with it space for me to consider what really felt important in my life. I didn't really enjoy admitting to myself that my identity had become so wrapped up in my work. Since all false senses of security and purpose were wiped away in a matter of days, a world of possibility opened up to me, and I left like I was given permission to think about things differently.

My partner and I, who previously did not want children, decided to try for a little one. Family and community suddenly felt so important and we had numerous conversations about what we hoped to cultivate, and all at once the idea of welcoming in a new little person felt deeply important. I was lucky to conceive quickly, and before we knew it, I was experiencing a pregnancy in the middle of the pandemic.

Dealing with anything medical during the pandemic continues to be incredibly difficult and challenging, and a pregnancy was no different. I was forced to reframe my ideas of what a pregnancy "should" look like. My partner wasn't allowed at any appointments or ultrasounds; I wasn't able to receive visits from long distance family and friends. A baby shower was off the table. Suddenly leaving the house was a moral decision every single time. About four months into my pregnancy, I tested positive for Covid. I was working with the public and knew the risks. Fortunately, I had a fairly mild case and nothing happened to my little one in the process. In a way I felt extremely lucky. Having Covid is never ideal, and certainly not when you're in a "high risk" situation, such as pregnancy. However, *having* Covid, and only experiencing mild symptoms gave me huge relief.

Now, I am a mother to a four month old, still living in the times of Covid. I've had to make hard decisions and set boundaries with family and friends who aren't vaccinated. Most people in my life still haven't met my son because, in my opinion, the risks still outweigh the benefits. I often wonder how this will impact my child, whose first interactions with the world have mostly been at home and mostly around people wearing masks. I wonder how my stress levels during pregnancy have impacted him. I wonder at many things that we won't have an understanding of for many years. I am one of the lucky ones who made it through this time with this beautiful new gift. There was difficulty as well—lost jobs, deaths in the family, entire realities turned upside down. But, I do believe it is equally important to focus on the positives in the midst of the devastation. More

than anything, I hope to remember society's **humanity** during this time, if at all possible.