

Transcript of Interview with Christie Peetoom By Kit Heintzman

Interviewee: Christie Peetoom

Interviewer: Kit Heintzman

Date: 09/22/2022

Location (Interviewee): Idaho

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Angelica S Ramos

Some of the things we spoke about include:

Having just started working as a high school cheer coach at the beginning of the pandemic. Running a dance studio, moving classes online and outside, pre-recorded lessons, taped rehearsals. Learning new technology to teach. First hearing about the pandemic while in Hawaii on a family vacation. Contacting the health department early in the pandemic about safety precautions and not getting answers; growing skepticism about the value of lockdowns. Washington state banning the prescription of Ivermectin. Moving from Washington State to Idaho during the pandemic due to restrictions; changing relationship with one's hometown. Being an introvert and watching extroverted husband and son struggling; humans as social creatures. Narratives associated with breaking social distancing guidelines: bad mom, selfish. Catching COVID while out of state, having traveled for an uncle's, Norm's, funeral; outdoor funeral, motorcycle procession. Driving home from California with COVID. Cranial sacral therapy treatment for COVID. Having lasting relationships with medical professionals: family physician, chiropractor, naturopath. Preferring natural medicines instead of pharmaceuticals and vaccinations. Treating COVID with Ivermectin; husband hospitalized for 5 days with COVID for low oxygen; worries about him not returning from the hospital. Daughter going into the hospital alone without an adult advocate. Earlier lead poisoning impacting the experience of COVID. Naturopath recommending against vaccination; writing a medical exemption. Religious medical exemption; faith and the importance of discernment. Brain washing, manipulation, and abusive tactics in government rhetoric. Different ways of presenting data: the same information can look more or less scary depending on how it is relayed. Inconsistent policies for unvaccinated workers. Becoming the voice for other school workers who did not want to be vaccinated but who could not afford to lose their jobs. COVID policies as exercises of power over others. Vaccine and testing regulations impacting children's sports. Outbreaks happening among vaccinated people. Vaccines failing to live up to their promises. Homeschooling children. The pandemic's impact on mental health.

Kit Heintzman 00:03

Would you please state your name, the date, the time and your location?

Christie Peetoom 00:07

Christie Peetoom them. It is 8:04am on September 22, and I'm in Idaho.

Kit Heintzman 00:18

And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under a Creative Commons license attribution noncommercial sharealike?

Christie Peetoom 00:28

Yes.

Kit Heintzman 00:29

Thank you so much for being here with me today. Would you please start by introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening?

Christie Peetoom 00:36

Yes. So I am Christie Peetoom. And I now live in Idaho, I came from Washington State, just last December, and my current career is in real estate. And prior to that I own the dance studio and was a high school cheer coach.

Kit Heintzman 00:57

Tell me a story about your life during the pandemic.

Christie Peetoom 01:02

Yeah, so you know, it was interesting in the beginning, you know, we were all shutting down. So that's what we did. And at the time, like I said, I owned a dance studio. And I was just beginning my journey as a high school cheer coach at that time, and I also volunteered and headed a youth cheer program for the school district. It wasn't for the school district, but it was for the school dis, you know, like the the kids in the school. And so you know, when when COVID first hit, of course, everything shut down. And we did too. And we started with online classes with our studio did that for a couple of months. And then when we were able to open, we had restrictions, of course, and so we ended up building an outdoor dance studio and doing a virtual recital and the virtual filming of our recital, which was so different and a huge challenge, but it was very rewarding, knowing that we could accomplish something out of all of that in the beginning. And so that's kind of how everything started for us in the pandemic. didn't finish that way. But that's, that was that was our beginning to our journey.

Kit Heintzman 02:29

What was it like teaching dance over zoom?

Christie Peetoom 02:34

It was really hard. It was at we actually did. I didn't know a whole lot about Zoom, when we first started. And so I ended up doing pre recorded YouTube videos for our teachings. And, you know, just the upload time and all of those things. And all of that technology, I didn't know how to how to do it. And so it took was a big learning curve there. And I don't think it was exactly ideal. For the students who didn't have a ton of interaction. I'm glad we didn't do Zoom only because trying to see each kid while you're teaching class teaching, I think that would be really hard. So those pre recorded lessons helped us to be able to get out the choreography and the things that we were trying to teach without having to worry about the all the technical side of that, you know, the technical side of things came in the uploads and that kind of stuff. So that was after the fact of teaching. So it wasn't ideal. We were really, really, really missed our kids. Of course, we teach because we love kids, and we want them in the building and that interaction, that interaction with each other and they missed each other too. We actually lost two thirds of our students during that time, which was also really difficult, trying to keep the studio doors open. So I'm, just not ideal for anyone, right?

Kit Heintzman 04:00

To the extent that you're comfortable sharing, would you say something about your experiences of health and healthcare infrastructure pre pandemic?

Christie Peetoom 04:15

I mean, I just I didn't I never gave it a whole lot of thought, you know, I had a doctor that I trusted. We've had the same small family doctor since our kids were born and I also see a naturopath and I see a chiropractor and they get massage and I do the things that I need to do PT whatever I need to do to take care of my body when I need it. I'm not huge on medicine. I have gotten traditional vaccines prior to you know, I don't get the flu shot. I take medicine as I as I have to but I don't prefer to prefer natural ways of things. But yeah, if you know if there's something broken or if there's something that that you need to do. I've always done it if, if that's what I need for my body. And that's how I felt prior to.

Kit Heintzman 05:11

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19?

Christie Peetoom 05:15

I do. Um, we were actually in Hawaii at the time on a family vacation. And then I was like, Oh, this is interesting. You know, it's just kind of like people talking about it, you don't really know which way it was gonna go. And then our dancers. So that was January, and our dancers, we came home or dancers had dance competition down in Seattle. And right after that competition was when the first case COVID hit in Seattle. And shortly after, it just kind of I think, you know, I kept calling the health department like, what do we do? What do we do? You know, and because I didn't know, right, and so I wanted to be careful. And like, you'll know, and sure enough, we all knew because we all got shut down. Right? So yeah, it was at first I felt like at first it was, it was just scary. And I wanted to protect my students. And they wanted to protect my family, and they wanted to protect our grandparents. And but as it went on, and on and on and on, that began to shift for me and I became a little bit more skeptical of, you know, how long is this healthy for, we can't really sustain this, I'm seeing the effects of our kids, seeing the effects of so many of my not only my business, but our friends businesses. And I am introverted. And so it wasn't actually terrible for me being home. My husband and my son are extremely extroverted. And I literally watched their souls crumble. And it was, that was really hard. My son, completely shut down, going into online school, he, it was so hard for him that he couldn't even join his classroom, Zoom meetings with the other kids, because he missed him so much. And he just didn't have that same interaction. And so try, we tried to do a lot of different activities and go and go on hikes and do things. But at the end of the day, it's, you know, our family unit, and I have a daughter as well. Um, she also really missed her friends, missed her friends dancing, but she's a little bit more like me were home isn't. As long as she can go on an activity, it's not that big of a deal if it's with a group of people or not. So eventually, after a few weeks, you know, we ended up seeing some people and, and because my husband and my son just were like, we can't keep going like this. And so we did have a core group of friends and family that we've stuck with in the beginning, which was much more healthy for my family. That's what needed to be done.

Kit Heintzman 07:54

I'd love to hear more about what it was like that first time that you decided to spend time with this group of people.

Christie Peetoom 08:01

I actually cried. I was super nervous. I, you know, I felt like it just it. It was in our heads so much that if you do this, you could die. Basically, it was the alternative. And I thought I felt like a bad mom, I felt like a bad person. I

felt like I was being selfish. I felt, you know, all of those things that were being, the narratives that were being spoken, especially by our governor of Washington State, were very negative. And, you know, if you're a good Washingtonian, you will do XYZ. And so that brainwashes you I feel like after a little while, and some time, and especially when you're trying to navigate what is healthy and what is not, and what is real and what is not. And so, my husband, you know, he was the first one, he was like, I'm not living like this. I'm throwing my hands in the air. We're not doing it. And I admit that I wasn't on board right away. And so I felt I struggled with that guilt. And then of course, there's like, a couple of weeks goes by after and you're like waiting in a couple of weeks. Are we gonna get sick now? Did we just kill our kids? You know what I mean? And so it, it was scary. But, and then we did eventually get COVID way later. Last summer, actually, which would have been 2021. We were given ivermectin by our doctor, which was, I think what saved our lives. My husband was hospitalized, which was very scary because you know, you say your goodbyes and and I asked him afterwards, I was like, would you do anything differently? And he said, No, you know, I, I would I would not have been able like if that would have been the end of my life like I needed to live my life. I couldn't live my life fearful of that moment or what that moment could bring you know, and I I, I have I did have friends that had family members pass away. And our fam, our not not close friends of mine that I would see that had other members. But I know of people that had family members that passed away. And they have kind of a similar perspective, you know, they live their life. And I know other people have different perspectives. And it's been, I don't think there's necessarily a right or wrong when it comes to that. But for our family and my husband, you know, we were grateful that we got to keep him and he he's grateful that he got to continue to live his life, you know, in that timeframe. And ironically, when we got COVID, we got it when we were traveling for my uncle's funeral, my uncle had passed away right before COVID hit. And we weren't able to have a funeral. So we waited a about a year and a half, and then finally have a funeral. And then we got COVID. Anyway, so I mean, it's like, that's the other thing. It's like, you wait a year and a half, and you wait all this time just to have a funeral. And because you're trying to protect everybody, and then it didn't work out anyway, you know, so how long do we put our lives on hold, I guess is kind of where I, where a lot of my getting back to normal sooner happened for our family.

Kit Heintzman 11:27

I'd love to hear a bit about who your uncle was to you.

Christie Peetoom 11:32

Um, so we he lived in California, and we lived in Washington. And so I didn't see him all the time. But whenever we would take a road trip, we always made sure to pass through and say hi. I moved, our family moved out of state when I was a kid. So I just on family vacations, we would see him. But, he would sing. And he could play the guitar. And so that was my favorite memories. Like we would just sit around the family room, and he would play and sing. And he was also very, very, very funny and sarcastic. And some he would add in his humor with that. And so just a really, really happy nice, sweet man.

Kit Heintzman 12:15

Could you paint me a picture of what that funeral was like when you finally had it?

Christie Peetoom 12:22

Yeah, so we ended up having it at their house, they have lots of property. And he rode motor or had a motorcycle that he loved. And so the guys that he would ride with, they all came in and brought their motorcycles in and did

like a little parade in, and then we, it was just like a potluck style. You know, and there were, it was outdoors. We had slideshow that people got to tell stories and memories. So it was it was really neat.

Kit Heintzman 13:01

What you tell me a bit about what the sort of physical experience of having COVID was like for you?

Christie Peetoom 13:09

Yeah, so we were, we were actually on a road trip because of the funeral when we got it when we came down with it, so we were trying to drive home. And that was, that was weird. I mean, I don't even think I remember necessarily the whole drive home. You know, my husband, I just kept switching off because we're both sick. And it was just like, we just gotta get our kids home. Our son never, he got COVID But he never He never had symptoms never tested positive. We tested him three times. And we ended up testing for the antibodies. And he popped up with COVID which like he had had it you know, which is funny, but my daughter got it not not very bad. I have nerve damage from lead poisoning. Anyway. And so when I got COVID It really struck my nervous system and they felt like my nerves were on fire. Like and that was that was the hardest part for me is because it just hit me so weird. And I couldn't get comfortable and I was in pain all the time. And that lasted for probably like maybe five to seven days of that. I did lose my taste and smell and then other than that, it just felt like, you know, a regular sickness. I was just really tired that I was really tired for a couple of weeks. And then I worked with a naturopath to kind of even things back out once I started getting better and I noticed some of those residual effects were lasting and then I'd say about a month went by and then I was back to myself after working with her.

Kit Heintzman 14:52

I'd love to hear more about what was going on with you in the naturopath. What were you doing with her?

Christie Peetoom 14:58

I don't even remember what I took I just was like hey, well she also does cranial psychotherapy. And that helps, too. And that was a big help for me resetting my nervous system. Because I had been doing that cranial psychotherapy for quite some time, too. I think it was just like my body. Once I did it again, kind of reset into that. And that was helpful. But I don't remember what she had me on. Honestly. I remember her talking about inflammation. And I remember her talking about you know, your body's kind of like, over inflamed, overreacting and kind of getting that back to normal. It's what she focused on.

Kit Heintzman 15:41

Would you tell me more about the ivermectin? What was it like when the doctor prescribed it? What was it like for you to physically take it?

Christie Peetoom 15:49

Yeah, it's just it was like a five day. I think it was just a really, a really short I, It's just a pill. Nothing to it really is just like, you know, regular medicine. And I felt better pretty immediately and Mikes recovery was pretty quick after he started taking lead as well. So I think it was really effective. No side effects with that.

Kit Heintzman 16:21

What was it like for you when your husband was hospitalized?

Christie Peetoom 16:25

It was really scary, especially like when he left. I remember just like, the doc we had, we had been in communication with our doctor when we got COVID. And he was like, if his oxygen goes below 90 that he needs to go to the hospital. And that was kind of like our guideline. And so we had a friend that had brought over an oxygen monitor. And so we're both monitoring, and we were monitoring **Emberley**. And so he woke up one morning, and he couldn't breathe. And he grasped for me. And I'm like, I mean, there's your most helpless feeling that you have, right? Like, I can't breathe for you, if I could, I absolutely would, you know. And so then we took his oxygen, and that was at I don't remember exactly, but it was high 80s. And it was, you know, for under 90 and call the doctor and he said, Yep, you need to go in and so, but it just leaving to go was like, it was really hard to just get him to come because he just, I don't think he thought he was coming back. You know, I think he was like, it was just, and I think part of that is what you're told what you hear the fear behind everything, you know, and and just the unknown. So took them to the hospital. I actually took my doctor too, or sorry my daughter too, because she has a history of pneumonia. She has had pneumonia a few times throughout her life. And so I wanted to be sure that nothing was settling in her chest. And so we wanted to do some chest X rays, and just make sure that she was doing okay. So the doctors like yea since youre going in anyway, just go ahead and take her with you. And so that process was very frustrating. I had called the hospital on their way in already emotional anyway. And I had said, this is our situation, all three of us have COVID. You know, can I come and be my daughter's advocate because my husband is sick. And he can hardly talk, you can hardly walk. And so they said yes, no problem. So I got there and I had two security guards literally blocked me from coming into the hospital. And they said you can't come in and and I said I'm coming in because of my daughter. And he can't advocate for her. And she is so they they just they wouldn't let me come in. There's a long story short. And so that was that was really frustrating. He's trying to do her paperwork. He's trying to answer her questions, you know, he can't like again, hardly walk or talk. So I just sat in the car and waited, you know, and then they called me and they started answering it's our being able to answer the questions on the phone. But then they proceeded to you know, they wanted to do bloodwork with her and they want to do all these things. And she was just there for a chest X ray, which was very frustrating because he didn't really know what was going on. And bless her heart. She was just like, Nope, you are not sticking your needle you are not putting that into you are not doing so she just she just said no herself. She's very afraid of needles. And so without like him being there and me being there. She was just like, give me a chest X ray and get me out of here. So I was proud of her for being able to stand up for what she felt she needed and at least you know, but that was I do think though that having the stress of that and kind of distracted me from the whole goodbye situation. and which in hindsight was probably actually better, you know, just to be able to let him go in, get him the care that he needed not have that drawn out. So he was I think I said this, but he was there for five days. So that was kind of the minimum they did with the treatments they did. And he was just, he became very determined, you know, he kept trying to get up and walk around, and he had this little machine that he had to blow in. And he's like, I did that constantly. You know, so he just, he was like, I'm not coming here to die. So I think, and we had some friends that were nurses that were checking in on him and taking good care of them. So it was really felt like like it's worth

Kit Heintzman 20:47

2020 was such a big year beyond just the pandemic, as was 2021, 2022 also has a lot still happening. I'm wondering other than COVID-19, what are some of those social and political issues that have been on your mind over the last couple of years?

Christie Peetoom 21:11

Well, maybe I'll just kind of dive into a little bit more about what happened through COVID. And then that might lead me to that if that's okay. Um, so as I said, we kind of like shifted our mindset. And Washington State specifically cracked down on mask wearing and vaccinations and testing and all of these requirements and things to just kind of go to restaurants or do anything like there was just a lot of up to go to work, whatever. We actually started to feel like this has been going on too long. Not every state is behaving this way and not other countries behaving this way. Right after we had the ivermectin situation, sorry. I was sick a couple days ago. And so this lingering cough.

Christie Peetoom 22:11

So right after Mike and I were given ivermectin, and that was really helpful. The governor of Washington State actually put a ban on it, but no, no doctors could prescribe it. And so things like this happen, right? Where I'm like, why, when something is working. are you gonna say, don't do it anymore? This just saved our lives, or at least Mike's life, right? And so you start to question all of these little things that are happening, you know, when you turn on, and you watch the Washington State, Oregon State, and California State governors all get on and almost word for word, say the same speech. I'm very familiar with abusive tactics and manipulation. And they could see I think, in one of the speeches, I watched from Governor Inslee, there were 38 times that he used some kind of brainwashing or, or manipulation tactic in the speech, and I just, I start to sit down and watch these things a little bit more objectively and, and think what really is going on here and it it makes you stop to makes you stop trusting and makes you stop wanting to follow blindly, you know, and then so then once you start questioning things, and once you start looking into facts, and once you start calling the health department, and I'm a numbers person, I understand how how data works, you, you can spin data, any way you want to make it look how you want it to. So sometimes I think it was in the presentation of the data. And so if numbers were put out, and this was, you know, what it looked like, sometimes I would take those numbers and then go well, what it would look like if I presented it in this way. And that's a lot less threatening. So then I I started to think, Well, why would someone want to cause all this turmoil for our country or for our world? Why wouldn't you just present it this way? Why would we want to have all this fear, right? And so then you start, you just, I just, quite honestly questioned everything. And that's kind of the next phase that I got into which So, but then we got sick and then the COVID vaccination mandate happened for state employees in Washington State. And I was a district employee because I had that cheer coach job at the high school. And I still had my dance studio at this time, struggled the whole time. You know, we we had and that's the other thing I think owning a business through this time. I know, we we not one time, not one time and all of COVID we have a spread of COVID inside our studio, we follow the rules, we kept things clean. We masked when we had to. But we also if someone said they couldn't, because they had a medical condition, I honored that like that is not my business. And I'm not going to make you do that. Right. I, I had people turn me into Labor and Industries, I had Labor and Industries trying to shut me down. And it was super frustrating because I'm like, I am literally jumping through all of these hoops. We had points in time where we can only have five kids to a classroom. And I had we had three studios want to the studios were separated by a door and one to the studios were separated by a hallway. And we had our class sizes, if they were, you know, say if I had eight or 10 kids in a class, I'd have to split those kids into two studios and have the teacher teach from the hallway or between the door just to accommodate. So it's, you know, the ridiculousness of what we had to go through all for them to just turn around and say, I believe it was January 2021. So a year into it. Dance is a low risk sport, it's not spreading COVID. So we don't have to follow these rules anymore. You know what I mean? It's just it's like, and it's like masks, don't mask, masks don't mask. And so as we're going through this roller coaster of these rules, and things are constantly changing. I'm trying to really pick out why and what you know. And so that shifted a lot of my thinking, and then with the school district. You

know, they had a whole nother set of roles too. And once the vaccination mandate came out, I got a because I shared with you my nervous system issues. My naturopath was like, absolutely not like I you know, she actually is she opinions aside, she was pro vaccination for COVID vaccination, but she said for some of my patients, I recommend they don't get it, and you're one of them. And she did say that there's possibly a vaccine that might come out later that I could get, but anything currently could be damaging to the issues I already have going on. And so she wrote me a medical exemption, and then I also religiously, just feel like, it is my responsibility to have discernment. And to understand what, what I'm, why am I doing what I'm doing? And how is that doing that because I'm actually helping other people, I'm doing my duty as a human being or my doing that because I'm following blindly. And that was, I didn't feel that the vaccination was going to do enough to really, really help a lot of people. So using that discernment, I just felt like my conviction for me it was like God was like, you need to you need to be careful not to follow things blindly. As our world goes more and more one, you know, you know, so that from a biblical standpoint, you know, believe that our world will go a certain way. And I do need to be able to stand up and say no to things during those times. And so I feel like this is almost preparation for that a little bit. And just like I felt forewarned. So I did claim a religious exemption as well. So I had two exemptions, and the school district honored them, but with a whole bunch of stipulations. So this is where it really got interesting. And I spent from September to basically, well, really heavily September and October of last year, so a year ago. I'm researching. I met with the health department's both Washington State and our county. I met with legislators I met with our county council members, I met with our school board members, I met with our governor's office, even our one of our legislators put me in a meeting with our governor's office trying to understand and make sense of all of the guidelines, and they have pages and pages of guidelines and they have guidelines that are put out by Labor and Industries, guidelines that are put out by this health department guidelines that are put out by the WIAA which governs the the sport the sports for the school districts. Guidelines for the school districts. I mean, there's there's guidelines everywhere, right so I've got I have a All of these that I'm reading through and sorting through, and again, like I said, I'm a numbers person. And so I'm, I'm looking at how everything is going. And I have most of my documentation and email, which was really, really fantastic because I was able to then use questions that I had answered by the Health Department sent those on to the school district and to the board. But basically, what it came down to is the school districts had very specific guidelines to follow, which were the COVID vaccination mandate, you could honor religious or medical exemptions at the schools discretion. The school's lawyer advised them to not, not honor anyone's because then someone could pop up and say, you know, you didn't honor mine. And here's a lawsuit. Fair enough. But each district had a choice in what additional requirements they were going to require of their employees. There were there were recommendations from the health department that say you could include XYZ our district took that as we're including it all, we have to include it all no ifs, ands, or buts. There were other districts in our county that did not do that they didn't require anything extra. They were just like, Okay, you're exempt. No problem, we're not going to put a mark on you, we're not going to let anyone know you're different. We're not going to make you test every week or make you wear a KN95, or do anything else. And so that specifically was what I was trying to fight because I felt like, at this point, the numbers started to roll in of the vaccinated versus the unvaccinated the spread of COVID, we were still seeing a spread of COVID from the vaccinated. So I felt like, if you're gonna do this, for the unvaccinated, you need to do this for the vaccinated and I had a group of teachers that I was working with it all.

Christie Peetoom 32:03

They all felt as passionately as I did, but they couldn't afford to lose their jobs. And so I'm like, I'm just a high school cheer coach. So I can afford it, I mean, I don't want to lose my job. But I, it's this is financially not going to hurt my family. So I became kind of that voice. And we met regularly. And I met with a board and I pass on the

information I was getting from the health department. And it was, it was really interesting, because as the process unrolled, no one can combat the information that I was bringing forward. The health department, I have emails from the health department saying, Well your school has choice. They, they can do this. The school was given that information. But at the end of it, you know, they take it to a vote, and then they have to decide whether or not they're gonna keep me. And it wasn't unanimous. And that was the whole thing was just, it was just sad. It was it was hard. And what I discovered I feel like the most was that when when someone wants to hold power in a certain way, or when they feel one way, and they have the power to do something. They say will, and they will do it in their day to night. Right? So it didn't matter. The health department said they had choice. It didn't matter. Other school districts weren't doing it, it didn't matter. Their opinion was this is what should be done. So that's what they did. And that meant that I got fired, or let go, I'm not really exactly sure of the correct term. It was it's not technically technically a firing, I think it's like a non compliance or something like that. If I would have been in the school district 15 minutes away, totally different story, I would have still had my job. When you look at things like that, and those things happen to you. And this is supposed to be, you know, a country that we are free to make those decisions. You start to see things a lot differently. You know, and my husband and I were very involved in politics prior to COVID. He actually ran for Whatcom County council a few years prior to that. We had our eyes open largely at that point with both the Republican Party and the Democrat party at that time. It's a lot about money. It's a lot about power, and it's not about us as people. So that fed in also to what was happening here, right. And what did happen throughout our whole experience your COVID. So when you ask about politics and things, you know, we moved to Idaho. That's what we did. That's how I feel. So I'm also, after I was let go. And I will say that one of the guidelines that we had around us was that if you are in your 90 day of having COVID, within that window, you don't have to do any of the extra stuff. So I was actually fired when I was still within my 90 days of having COVID For noncompliant to something that I didn't actually technically have to comply for a few more weeks. So there was a whole bunch of layers to, to these things, our cheer room, we have all the school also has to comply with the cleaning procedures aren't your room in my entire time there wasn't cleaned or sanitized one time, it was swept once. And that was when there was like some bird nest stuff that fell in. And, but it was never sanitized. It was never cleaned. I mean, those girls would come in and they would, you know, they're, they've got their stunting. So they've got their shoes, and they've got their shoes by their face, and then they're, you know, touching each other. And it just, it doesn't, it just none of it made sense, right? I guess that's my biggest point. And if you're going to have if you're going to fire me over compliance, you better be complying for everything down to a tee crossing every T and dotting every i Otherwise, it's discrimination. And that's really like my it's it's not even that so much. I mean, it's discrimination. But it's also like you're picking and choosing what you want to do and what you want to follow based on what agenda and that whole, what agenda is that question mark that I had, through this thing. And coming into the next month, my son wanted to play basketball, he's 12. Or he was 12 at the time. And they had a vaccinate or tests rule. And, you know, I had no, we had a problem with this split test, which we offered to pay for and do ourselves like we'll come we'll do it there. We'll order it, we'll do it ourselves. But the school said no, they only wanted to nose swab test. And so Lance showed up to practice a couple times. And the first time they ended up shutting down practice and sending all the boys home. It was Lance and two other boys that came to practice that were not vaccinated and didn't want to do that test all were willing to do the saliva test. And so then the second day, they actually isolated the whole basketball team. So back to the compliance in the rules. They state that whenever the boys are not playing basketball, they have to be six feet apart and masked. So the school district took all the boys put them all down and went into the gym. unmasked, not six feet apart, for 45 minutes, they sat them there while they pulled our boys into the middle of the gym, and basically tried to bully them into submission or to leave. And my 12 year old, standing there up against his school principals, school administrators. I'm locked out of a gym, they locked us

out. So my husband and I are standing just on the other side of the gym. And we're just watching this play out. You know what, at what point? Are we absolutely nuts now? Do you know what I mean? Like when is this too far? My 12 year old son, in my opinion has more character and more courage than those men that were doing that to him. And I'm proud of him for that. But and he's stronger for that now, but it should have never come it should have never come to that, you know, if these testing requirements are twice a week, and we're in the first two days of practice, we still have a whole nother five days to test later on this week and figure this out. Is this really necessary? You know, we had come as parents and sat down in the office and talked we were still in negotiations. So all these things that happen when we see me just go, we want a better life for our kids. We want freedom for our kids. We want things to make sense. You know, I owning a business. I have never not had goals and procedures that you have to, I love structure. But I'm always redesigning things, to make them make the most sense and to make them work for people. And so and being inclusive and that like if someone can comes to me with a problem or a need. Okay, how can we make that work for you? You know, and I feel like that's what good leadership does. And I feel like that is not happening in our schools. It's not happening in our elected officials, from the city councils all the way up to the top of our country. I don't know, I just I feel like I've lost a lot of hope in our politics here. I feel like we're always all just fighting. Washington was so so so divided. If you weren't wearing a mask, and someone thought you should be people would come into your space, come into your 6 feet, you know, just to yell at you and get in your face about not wearing a mask. And it's like, why didn't you just stay away? You know what I mean? So I just I don't know, it's just a really interesting time. That made all kinds of politics heightened and made so much more division, because people felt like they really had to fight one way or the other. I feel like I have to fight to be protected, or I feel like I have to fight to be free. You know, and that was kind of the two, those are kind of the two issues that were going on. And I didn't want to not, I wanted to be protected too I wanted to fight to protect other people, I want you to live like that I want you to do what's best for you. I never wanted that to be different for anyone. I just wanted things to make sense. When they didn't, you know, and I wanted people to have a freedom to choose things. If that allowed people to still stay safe, stay safe. Shortly after I was let go. I think maybe within a month or two 70% of our vaccinated staff at Blaine had COVID 70%.

Christie Peetoom 41:59

They are not testing. So they're vaccinated. So they didn't test right. So now we have this huge outbreak of COVID. At Blaine, we had students out staff out. It didn't make sense. It wasn't necessary, their requirements didn't protect them. You know, and that was kind of my whole point to this. And a lot of the facts that I brought up to them, it's like you said this was going to do this, you said this is going to protect you said this is going to prevent but it didn't. And now you've in addition to that hurt people lost jobs are lost, kids have been hurt, our suicide rate is up. You know, and for me from a mental health standpoint, and from a kid standpoint, I saw the kids suffering the most right. I used to do a mentorship program at the school prior to COVID. And so we would take kids that maybe didn't have the best home life or maybe were bullied at school or whatever it was. And we had a group of parents or grandparents or whoever wanted to volunteer that would come in. And every Friday, we would like [inaudible] to the kids and eat lunch with the kids. And it was like it was a blast. And then we you could see the turnaround. And you could see just having someone that was willing to invest in them and loving them like that competence and it built over time. And, you know, we're this far out of COVID. And that program still isn't put back in. You know, we've got all these high paid admin, counselors, psychologists, all these people. But we have so many lost kids still. Right. And it's just, um, you're gonna have lost kids, I get that. But now we've got all these overpaid positions who were vaccinated, thank goodness. And then we've got all of these volunteers that are no longer welcomed into the school, because of all these new vaccination procedures. And our kids are

still not and their needs are not being met. You know, it just, it's not okay with me. None of it's okay with me. And so when it comes into politics, and that was a very long journey to answer your question, sorry. But, um, I think politics is self self serving. And I think there's, I know for a fact, there's a lot of money handling that goes on behind the scenes. It's about power, it's about money. And it's like that on there on both sides of the parties. And I don't even know how to fix that. I don't, I mean, it's been going on long before I was born. Right. One of the gifts that I had during COVID was As this is my favorite thing about COVID I got to homeschool my kids actually, like separate from the district. So the first one, the schools first shut down. They did online school through the school. And that was hard because bless their teachers heart, they're trying, they're trying to teach all these kids, you know, none of the parents know what the curriculum is no, no, the parents know what's going on. But of course, the parents are at the house. So the kids who do they ask, they ask their parents are like, and so it just wasn't working. So the next year when the online school was, they were saying they were gonna go online, I just was like, we're not doing this again. So did our own curriculum did our own thing. And that was the best time of my life with my kids. And that was those are memories that will forever keep. But we did the history of the United States starting just about the time of the Civil War, all the way through present day. And it was really interesting correlations along the way. So when I say these things have been going on for years, you know, they have and we, as a society, allow them to happen. You know, we care more about our social media, we care more about hanging out with your friends, we care more about ourselves in our lives, and we let the stuff go on behind the scenes, and we don't pay attention to it, we don't fight for it. We don't call it out. You know. So we we escaped Washington, because we felt like we've thought and thought and thought and thought and thought more than we were going to make a difference. And it was starting to affect the health of our family. It was super hard to go through everything that we went through. I actually recently have been feeling so I lost my grandma several years ago. And every year that time of year, you know, you feel kind of sad, and you're like, Oh, why do I feel sad? It's, it's, it's, it's the anniversary and it's like that grief kind of pops up on the anniversary and I actually had that with the situation recently. I just broke down crying the other day because I've gone you know, you go through trauma through these things. And I don't think anybody thinks about that when you're in the fight or anybody understands or really knows what you're going through and you're going through all these things and then you have a big family move that you make, just to escape something I mean, there's a lot to that so but yeah, so for us personally, we we had to make that transition to have freedom and now I feel like we're kind of in this like a little bit of a lull where we're just almost taking healing time. We're like okay, well what's what's the next thing that we're we're gonna have to be looking out for or fighting for, but right now we're just healing.

Kit Heintzman 48:17

I wanted to ask gently if there's anything you would share about your familiarity with manipulation tactics that helped you notice what was happening?

Christie Peetoom 48:33

I'm probably not gonna say why I know that but experiences have experiences and then through research and then through counseling have taught me what those look like how to identify those and then how to not be inside that pattern. If that makes sense.

Kit Heintzman 48:57

Would you tell me what the word health means to you?

Christie Peetoom 49:02

That's a good question. Um. I mean, it's like I feel like it's just like a well being of your body your mind your soul Are you at peace? Can you get up and do the functions of the day? Like, are you content and happy in your heart? I think a lot of it a lot of a lot of health comes down to how we feel. We are not necessarily how you feel because we can all you know be on a roller coaster of feelings but um yeah, I think mental health is just as important as physical health. So it's all encompassing to me.

Kit Heintzman 49:53

And what does the word safety mean to you?

Christie Peetoom 50:07

Safety, um. That's a good question. I've never thought about that one. Safety means to me. I just I just feel the word protected. Right. So I guess the next question would be, well, what is protected mean? You know, where you're just out of harm's way you're able to live, live your life in a way that you're not going to get hurt.

Kit Heintzman 50:38

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

Christie Peetoom 50:43

I feel good. I feel good for my personal life. Or our country, or our world, not so much. You know, I I feel sad about the state of our world, I feel I feel sad about how many people I feel like are lost in their, in our country to you know, just you can tell when people don't look you in the eye. You know? Like, I don't know if that seems, can people, when you're walking down the street, actually look you in the eye say hello to you know, I just you can see it in people's eyes. Right. And so that makes me feel sad. I wish there was more. I wish there were more people that could really genuinely want to reach out to everyone else. And then care about where they're at. You know, and, and I feel like that's something that's important to me. And I try to do that my life, but I feel like there's a lot of people that are are still unreached and lost and sad. So that makes me sad. But I feel happy about like, you know, what's been happening inside of my life, which is a good thing, because that means I'll have more energy to go out and do more good things. So.

Kit Heintzman 52:12

What are some of your hopes for a longer term future?

Christie Peetoom 52:22

For my family or for? Hopes I mean, I Miss America Pageant answer world peace. No.

Christie Peetoom 52:41

No, I mean, honestly, though, like I I, I would hope that people could see their differences as something that could be used in a positive way rather than a negative way, I would hope that people would stop fighting so much, I would hope that people would be more respectful. I would hope that family values would be more instilled and that parents would show up and raise their kids and would hope, you know, that they put their electronics away and invest in their, in their families. And then for, for our family, you know, I just, I just I have hope and, and want for my kids to make a big impact in this world in a positive way. And that has been I can continue to do that. When we're not causing problems in the school district.

Kit Heintzman 53:41

What are some of the things that you do to take care of yourself?

Christie Peetoom 53:47

So talks about some of the health things that I do already and then I like to work out. I mentioned earlier that I'm introverted, so I try to take some alone time too. So sometimes that happens in the shape of working out and sometimes I'll paddleboard I love to paddleboard or even just like sitting, looking at the lake or whatever it is used to be the ocean now it's the lake. I love water. I love music. I love listening to music. I teach a little bit now because when I moved here I moved to real estate but I do. I do teach line dancing still to adults, which is a lot of fun. And that encourages other people and so that therefore encourages me. And let's see, I also stretch coach at a cheer gym and then I sometimes substitute teach dance for a little kids. So those are all things that I feel like for me because those are fun. I go to church. I've had a Bible study that I do. have done. I don't do consistently but, yeah.

Kit Heintzman 55:04

Did COVID interrupt your access to church at all?

Christie Peetoom 55:07

Yeah. Yes, it is. Completely. So it's, you know, we're just as human beings, we're not designed to be alone and not be present physically face to face with people. So, you know, Zoom church, it's not just like zoom dance or, you know, TV dance, or whatever it is, it's just not the same. And Zoom school is not the same. We were meant to be together. And we were meant to converse together to collaborate and to have relationships and see each other's faces our full faces, you know, and yeah, so it did interrupt that.

Kit Heintzman 56:00

Do you think of COVID-19 in the last couple years as a historic event?

Christie Peetoom 56:06

Yes, I do. I hope it never, ever, ever, ever comes back. And it's always in history now. But no, I do. I feel like it's extremely significant. You know.

Kit Heintzman 56:22

What do you think scholars in social sciences and humanities so people study things like literature or sociology or poli sci, what should we be doing to help us understand the human side of the pandemic?

Christie Peetoom 56:41

I mean, I think that these are, these are great, you know, actually meeting with people and learning things. I think you'll find there's more to be had, if you look inside the school districts, if you're looking inside, if you can talk with kids, if you can see studies, a numbers of depression rates, or suicide rates, or drug rates or whatever those things are, that maybe were prior to the pandemic, and then what it looks like now. I would be surprised if there wasn't a significant difference. Socially, it would be interesting to see if there was a way to get data on what our society was looking like, from an electronic standpoint, before and after. Studies on young children that were born during the pandemic where it was in in states that were heavily masked versus versus states that weren't what

psychological effects or even developmental effects, if any, are there. I'm sure there are studies like that being done. But I don't know of any.

Christie Peetoom 58:07

I mean, I, I will tell you, for me, when I cross the border, and I drive back to Washington and I, if I have my navigation going, and it says welcome to Washington, I actually get anxiety. Yeah, I like Don't tell me welcome to Washington is not a welcome. You know, this is the state that I grew up in is a state that I love this is this is that was my home, all of my friends and family are there. So it'd be interesting to see what the psychological effects truly are of the of people who went through this. And that could be any side of it, you know, if they lost someone to COVID, or if they felt like they were in a community that wasn't protecting them, or they couldn't stay safe or healthy there, or it could be any, any perspective of it, you know, but like, what kind of psychological effects are remaining? And then is there a link between those, and the narrative that was put out, you know, are we psychologically damaged because of COVID? Are we psychologically damaged because of what our government did? You know, that would be an interesting study.

Kit Heintzman 59:31

This is my last question. I'd like you to imagine speaking to a historian in the future someone far enough away that they have no lived experience of this moment. What would you tell them cannot be forgotten about right now?

Christie Peetoom 59:48

Has a really good question. Well, I feel I mean, most deep inside of me that our freedoms cannot be forgotten. And you have a freedom and a right to live your life and to protect yourself the way that you feel is best for you. And that needs to always be protected. You know. I also feel like, we can't forget that we should love each other. Do you know what I mean? I just were so so so so divided. And I feel like we can't forget that there are people and forces and and things in this world that the agenda and design could possibly be to pin us against each other. And we've allowed that to happen. We can't continue to allow that to happen.

Kit Heintzman 1:01:03

I want to thank you so much for the generosity of your time, and the kind thoughtfulness in your answers. Those are all of the questions I know the moment but I'm wondering if there's anything you'd like to share that my questions haven't made room for, please take some space and share it.

Christie Peetoom 1:01:29

I'm sure when I get off the phone, I'll think of something. I don't think there's anything. Thank you for having me here.

Kit Heintzman 1:01:47

Thank you so much.