

So many describe graduation as a loss, and I can respect that. I am sorry that so many people were not able to celebrate their graduations and celebrate their achievements. I know so many are upset to have lost the opportunity to walk across stage and spend time with their friends and family.

I am not one of those people. I just graduated on 28 May 2020 with a MA in History on the Archives track from the University of Massachusetts Boston. I am deeply proud of my accomplishment. It is this accomplishment that got me involved with this archive as a curator. Despite this, I hate graduation and was relieved when mine was cancelled. As an introvert, events like graduation are my worst nightmare. I have to be surrounded by people all day without a break, I am away from that which makes me comfortable (my roommates and dog namely), and I am put in a position where I have to interact with and entertain my family members (of which at least seven but likely more would have been in attendance) for four days straight without interruption or a chance to reset.

I know others may see this as me being ridiculous. After all, I am very privileged to be able to graduate at all, to have pursued a master's education and have a loving and supportive family to celebrate that accomplishment with. And I agree. I recognize and acknowledge that privilege, but it does not change the fact that graduation and other celebratory events like it are hell on earth for me. They drain me, physically, mentally, and emotionally, to the point where I often find myself struggling to function at the end of extended periods of time with family members. It is often made worse by the fact that I deeply love my family and find myself feeling guilt for how draining their presence can be. After all, it isn't them, it's me, so I should just suck it up and let it go. But that is not how it works. Trust me, I've tried.

As I see people posting about their graduations and attempting to support those who are missing out on such exciting events, I can't relate. Maybe it is because I already had a high school and undergraduate graduation, but also probably not. I think I would've been just as relieved to miss them. At the same time, it is easy to say that given I had those graduations. Who knows what I would have felt in the moment? In the end, my graduation was celebrated with a Skype call with some family members where I had the opportunity to talk and thank them all for their support but was able to avoid the stress of being around without reprieve. It was a much less stressful and more enjoyable experience than my previous graduations and will probably be the one I remember with the most fondness.

I'm not writing this to say people who are excited about their graduation are wrong, but to acknowledge the variety of feelings people may have. To all those who, like me, are relieved at the cancellation of graduation, I see you. That feeling, for whatever reason you feel it, is valid. And to everyone who graduated, congratulations. We should all be proud of our accomplishments; an inability to attend a ceremony does not negate them in any way.