The first holiday I recall from the beginning of the pandemic was by far the worst of the year 2020. Mother's day, my third one being a mother. I worked my shift at Starbucks that day, and it was by far, the busiest day I'd seen there in my three years. The line in the drive thru was longer than it had ever been, almost stopping traffic, probably 40 or 50 cars long. The lobby was packed, and there was no way for us to control the amount of people inside. Very few customers were wearing masks. Some of my partners (coworkers) are immunocompromised, and I myself live with my parents over 60 and my son who had just turned two. We did not know yet who was at the most risk.

As a supervisor, I felt helpless at keeping my team safe. We knew so little, but we knew we shouldn't have that many people in our lobby, and we knew that with this amount of business, we wouldn't be able to sanitize our lobby properly for our customers. I cried in the bathroom at one point, and I have suspicions other partners did the same, or at least when they got home.

The craziest part is, I understood why these people were there. Most of them were probably doing something nice for the mothers in their life. These people were dealing with the same unknown and fear as my partners and I were, and Starbucks brought them a sense of normalcy. Some of the customers had probably lost their jobs, or now had to juggle having kids at home and a full time job, worst of all, some people had probably already been cut off from the people they loved.

And that it the fight inside my soul during this pandemic: I understand why people want things to return to normal, and want to spend their holidays with their family. But more importantly, I want to spend future holidays with my family.