

**Description** - I am a victim of online pedophilia. My experience discusses how that has effected the switch to online school.

**Stephanie**      **00:00**

This audio entry, I'd like to talk a little bit about my experience with the covid 19 pandemic. While writing my own script for this, I wasn't too sure how to organize it. And the best way that I could think of was organizing it by my personal timeline. For me, it starts all the way back in around March of 2019. So I'm currently 16. And at the time, I was about 14, I was just about to turn 15. And my brother and I, we like to play video games a lot together, we have been for years before, I probably started when I was 11, or 12. And there's this messaging app called Discord. So on discord, it basically lets you talk and text people. And then usually it's used for game communication. So while you're playing games, you know, you can talk to your teammates, and whatever. So back in probably 2017, I met some guy, and we were just friends playing some games at the time, I was about 12. And he told me, he was 16. So I was like, you know, he's older than me. But it was kind of whatever, you just play video games. So we didn't talk all the time, we would just, you know, kind of play probably one game every two months. And we fell out of touch a little bit. Then, about two years later, like I said, in about 2019, Marchish, probably starting even as early as February, we started to talk more, and he became a lot more involved with my life, like we would just play pretty much every day and talk every day. It was all right until I realized like, he didn't seem as young as he said, he was like, at that time, I would have expected him to be about 18. And at some point I asked, and he admitted that he was actually 20. So that was the first red flag I probably should have noticed. But I kind of didn't, I was pretty naive. And it felt like we were friends for so long. But you know, if he was had mal intentions, he would have done it already. I promise this relates to the covid 19 pandemic at some point. This is just kind of the reason why I felt the way that I did during the pandemic. This is more of an emotional entry, rather than talking more factual or political. This is just my personal experience. So what happened was around March, he and I were talking a lot. And he had a girlfriend, they were both adults, she was 20 as well, he was 20. And, you know, I didn't really care at all, we were just friends or so I thought. Until one day, I realized things were getting kind of weird, where he would have a lot of problems with his girlfriend, she was kind of crazy, like, in the sense where she literally sent him about \$500 with the message attached to tell him to stop talking to me, she was very jealous of the time that we were spending together. And I thought that that was like the weirdest thing because I didn't think she would have any reason to be jealous of someone who was a minor while he was an adult. So when he would come to me with his problems, I was just very empathetic and didn't want him to feel bad. So I would let him talk to me and I would comfort him. And you know, we had been friends for two years at that point felt like we could trust each other all that stuff.

03:54

He started to tell me that things with his girlfriend was just going south. She was crazy and jealous. And he couldn't trust her. She couldn't trust him. It was just an unhealthy relationship. And I wanted to be a good friend. So I would tell him things like, you know, that's not good, you should get out of it. And, you know, I think he was just at a weak point. And I was kind of there to help him and offer him strength. And if he needed help, I was there. But the downside about that was he ended up kind of taking advantage of it. So things went from just playing games together to he would text me and ask for advice about his girlfriend. And then we just grew closer and bonded over just me helping him he was so

appreciative. And I was 14 I didn't have very many friends. I didn't really have many relationships. Like I've never had a boyfriend at that point. And you know, what did I know about relationships and I was offering A full grown man advice. But even so, he appreciated it. And I think part of me just wanted attention. So I just fell into whatever he really wanted me to do. And at some point that became telling him Good night, every day and good morning every day. And I thought it was pretty harmless. I just thought, the guy's sad and lonely and upset about his girlfriend. And what does it mean to me to just tell someone Good night or good morning, I said to my friends, and my parents and my, my brother. We just, it didn't seem like much to me. And to him if it helped it, I didn't care. It didn't matter to me. And it mattered to him. So it well, it didn't matter to me at first. until some days, I was still in school. And I remember, I was studying for finals. And he would just like, call me he because of the time. So since I was on discord, that meant he could be anywhere in the world. And it just so happened that I'm in Colorado, and he was in Texas. So we had about an hour time difference. And because of our time difference, sometimes I would be studying and you know, it's not quite the time that I would be going to bed yet. But for him, he was an adult, and he worked. So he would call me and just ask me to say goodnight. And I remember during finals week, I was studying really hard, and I wanted to focus on it. And one day, I told him, Hey, can I not call you tonight and say, Good, I really just wanted to focus and, you know, not talk to anyone not like get sidetrack. I just wanted to really get it done.

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And that was probably the first time he got really upset. Like, I, I wasn't expecting it, even in the slightest. He had never been mean, or you'd never lashed out like that at me. And I still remember what he was saying to me when I told him, No, he was texting me. And he was like, Oh, well, you don't care about me. And he told me he would hurt himself and how he knew that I was just like, all of the other girls that would play him and be mean to him. And I just felt awful. Because at the time, I thought he was just being genuine, I thought I really was just being a bad friend. So you know, I did what he wanted. And it wasn't a problem again, and I didn't think of it at all, because I was like the first time it happened. So after finals, you know, it was summer. And I was excited to to spend time with my friends online. Didn't have any in person friends, like I mentioned. So that meant that I would just be spending all of my time playing video games with my brother and any online friends that I had. And unfortunately for me, that included him. So what happened was, you know, we kept he kept me doing the Good night and good morning, every day. And I still thought it was harmless until he started to work earlier. And for me, that was about 5am my time. And I did not want to get up that early to tell him Good morning, obviously. But and I didn't think he would expect it from me there. But I remember when I did get that call, I woke up that first day that he had his schedule change. And I woke up and I was like, Oh, hey, good morning. You know, it's fine for today. But like I'd prefer if you didn't do it. It's like summer for me. So I'd like to sleep in and I like staying up late. That's just something I've always done. And he was like, Oh, yeah, sure, no problem. And I was like, Okay, cool. I didn't think he would handle it that well after like, the last time I told him no, but it's like, cool, that's fine. So then, later that night, when we were playing games, and he had to get off for work, it was still like 1am my time 2am his time, I guess. And I was like, all right, yeah, you know, good night. See you tomorrow. And then I didn't think he would call me because they told him not to. But again, he did call me at 5am and this time I was just too tired to pick up. I slept through the entire Call didn't answer. And when I did wake up, I woke up to seeing all of these missed calls on discord and a bunch of spam texts about how I should wake up and say that, say good morning to him, or else he would have a bad day. He's like, you know, if you don't say it to me,

then I'm gonna have a bad day, because you've always made my days better, you know? And he didn't take it very well that I told him that. I said, No, even if you call I wasn't gonna pick up because I just wanted to sleep. My summer vacation. And, you know, you shouldn't need this every day. Well, he completely took that, as me saying that I don't care about him. And then I wish that he would just suffer and not have good days, always wishing bad on him. And this entire time, he had a girlfriend too. And I told him, like, just get her to tell you these things in wide depend on me, you know, she always tells you not to talk to me anyways. So why don't you just talk to her instead. And at this point, it was getting kind of weird when I realized that he talked to me like six times more than he talked to his girlfriend. And his girlfriend wanted nothing but his attention. she just, she was so in love with him. And he just didn't care about her. All he wanted to do was talk to me and always spend time with me rather than her. And at the time, I didn't fully catch on because I was friends with him. And if he told me that his girlfriend was crazy, I was gonna side with him and agree that his girlfriend was crazy, because I just didn't know about her.

12:04

And I remember like, all the times that he would try to spend time with me and pull me away from my other friends, because he wasn't the only online friend that I had, I had plenty of other friends. And when we're playing video games together, sometimes he would, he wouldn't be playing video games with me and my friends, but he would call or text me and ask me to leave my friends either hang out with him, or call him and say good night. And he would tell me like it would mean more to him. And at the time, my brother and my, like my brother and I, we shared a room that our computers were in. And that meant that he could hear everything that I would say to other people. So I remember like this really awkward mess that I would go through where I would get onto discord on my phone, and I would like go to the bathroom to hide, call him be like, yeah, good night, have a good night. And then after he was satisfied, then I would just hang up and go back to the computer and keep spending time with my brother. So this kept up for a good while by sometime between early to mid June, things got a little bit more serious than I thought that they would. And one day, I was just talking to him. We were hanging out again. And we were just kind of he was just talking about his girlfriend again how much he realized he didn't like her and how much he just wanted to get out of the relationship. And I was like, Yeah, well, whatever your choices, I'll be here for you as like a friend support you serve it. And I completely remember the exact moment that he told me. He said stuff. I think I love you. And I was so naive, and I thought it was so platonic that I told her Yeah, love you too. And I meant it as you know, as a friend. And then he said, No, I mean, more than a friend like romantically. I told him. No, you can't. You're six years older than me. I'm 14 and a minor. And he said I know. But we just clicked differently. And I think when I was 14, I was just so desperate to have Someone tell me that I meant something to them that I didn't even really think too much about the age gap. And I was so focused on how I felt to feel apparently loved. Of course, I knew it was a little awkward. So I just kind of left it at that I didn't say too much back. I just thought, I just kept asking him why. And, you know, after he kept telling me about how much I've helped him, and how much he has, like how long he's felt for me, apparently, he claims he always felt a certain way for me before he knew I was a minor. And then he said, when he found out that I was so young, he said it was already too late. And I just for some reason, couldn't blame him for it. So that day, I didn't say it back to him. I was just confused. And he definitely noticed, he told me, Hey, you didn't say I love you, too. You didn't say back? And I told him Well, I don't know if I do. I've always just thought of you as a friend. And I still remember the way that he started yelling at me over

the phone. The way he said that. How can I not love him, he'd been so good to me and so kind to me. And he told me that he knew that there wasn't other people like that he knew that other people weren't as nice to me as he was. And I just kind of sat here in my closet and told myself, yeah, he's right. No one else has shown me that kind of affection or interest before. So I owe it to him to love him back. Right?

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That was the start of kind of the next phase into whatever we had going. And instead of just Good Night, and Good morning, every day, it was also good night. I love you. Good morning. I love you every day. And at that point, I think I didn't really have meaning to those words, because I didn't love him. And I kept just saying it to make him happy. It was the same deal where I figured if it doesn't bother me, what harm could it do if I just told him that if it made him feel better? From there, he started acting as if we were in a relationship. And I still remember, one day, he even proposed that we would have a committed relationship. And he he was very aware that he couldn't have a relationship with a minor. So I still remember how he told me. No, no, it's not an actual relationship, that would be illegal. Let's just agree to not date anyone else. And when you're 18, and four years, we can meet together. By this point, I realize that things were getting way too serious. And it was in way too deep. So while I noticed it late, I'm just glad that I noticed that here. And that's when I started to try to point out that this was just not normal. Like we couldn't have that kind of relationship. We can have this kind of, quote, friendship, but it's it wasn't our friendship at all, not to him. And that's what I wanted. But that's not what it felt like to me. So now I started just staying up and waking up early and getting about three hours of sleep every night. Because I was afraid he would start yelling at me again for missing my good morning, good night's. And I knew that if I were to do something that he didn't tell me I could do. He would give me a call and start screaming and yelling at me. And looking back on it. I feel so silly for being as scared as I was. But there's just something so terrifying to me about someone who was six years older than me, a grown man yelling at me and telling me how no one will ever love me like him and no one will ever like me and how I'm just worthless and he was the only person that could ever love me. And from this just happening every day for weeks and weeks, it definitely got to me. I definitely felt like he was right in that I would not have someone who could love me the way that he did. I didn't feel like I was worth anything, I felt so lucky to have him. So I would do what made him happy because it felt like it was the least I could do to almost repay him. I felt so indebted. While I was scared of his constant yelling, I realized at some point, well, you know, it's just yelling, I have to be a big kid and be strong and get over, I had to do what was right. And I couldn't keep doing this. It just wasn't healthy for me. And he wasn't someone that I should keep around. And when I realized that, I started to be a little bit more defiant to his requests, where he would ask me to send pictures of myself or call it really inconvenient times. During this entire time. I never wanted to get my parents involved, not even my brother involved. Because what was I going to tell them? Hey, Mom, and dad, there's a grown man online, who wants to take me away from me, he wants to come here and run away. And he and I can be together. And I still remember the offer he made where we could just run away from my parents, and they would never have to know. And the worst part is, I remember I even considered it at the

21:45

time. So there was nothing, I could tell them, I was afraid that if I told them, then they would just not trust me to ever be online or trust my brother to be online. And they still don't know to this day, I'm

sitting in the same closet hoping that my clothes in here will soundproof it well enough to where no one knows my little secret. It's more people know now. But it's just not something that I'm comfortable with sharing. I remember, I would talk to him. And when he would make strange requests, like certain pictures, and not to say that they were sexual, they were just definitely weird. But he would ask weird things of me like to say certain things or, you know, things along those lines. And right after, he would tell me, if you ever tell anyone about any of this, I'll find you. And I'll get your brother involved. I'll make sure your brother feels awful about it, I'll make sure that he feels even worse than you do. And he knew that this whole situation was just making me uncomfortable and unhappy. And he threatened to make it worse for my brother. He threatened to find me hurt me Take me. And it was scary. I couldn't tell anyone. And to this day, I get nervous about talking to other people about it. In this situation, I just felt very, very trapped. But I felt like there was also no other options. I felt that he was right. And that he was the only person that could possibly love me this one on all throughout June, July, a little bit into August of 2019. And I couldn't get out of it. I didn't think I could get out of it. Until I met some people, I made a group of friends. And it was the first group of friends I'd ever had all the way. When I was as odd as it sounded. I wasn't. It wasn't until I was 15 that I had that big of a group of friends. But they really helped me feel like I fit in other places and that they kind of showed me that maybe this guy was wrong. Maybe there was other people out there who would like me. And I remember there was just one guy that was in that friend group. And he went to my school when I was in sixth grade, but then he left and we hadn't talked since. But now going into sophomore year of high school during that summer. He was in that group through mutual friends. And when we talked again, we hit it off really well. It was like He was very nice. And his deal was he had pretty bad anxiety. And from me and my entire situation with the other guy online, I recognized the signs. And I was the only person that seemed to notice and he

25:19

appreciated it. So he and I started kind of talking and it was a little bit flirty. So I remember one day, I went home, and I was talking to the guy, and I told him, Hey, you know how we're friends, right? And he agreed he wanted to call it friends. But he didn't want it to be like friends. He just wanted to call it that. So he's like, yeah, we're friends. So I told him, Well, I met this guy, and things are going well, I think I like him. And that day, was one of the worst days of my life where he made the most threats I had ever hear him make. He not only threatened to me, but he threatened himself and people around him. And he completely blew up, like, saying things along the lines of you know that I'm in love with you. Uh, why would you tell me that you like someone else, you obviously just want to see me kill myself and you want to see me hurt, you want to hurt your brother, because you know that if you make me mad, then I'll do something to your brother. So you want to see him hurt. And he's my little brother, I couldn't put him in that position. He was just my baby brother. So I just kept with it. It was the scariest thing of my entire life, to be so afraid of him and what he could do to me and himself and my family and even some of his family sometimes. But at some point, I don't know what exactly drove me to do it. But as things progressed with the guy, in person in my friend group kind of progressed, I felt more comfortable and a little bit safer moving away from him. So I would just completely stop talking to him, I just completely cut the contact. And he would still text me every day like Oh, so we're just not going to talk anymore, you bitch. And I told him, yeah, we're not going to talk anymore. I didn't tell him that. I told myself that. And I made it a point not to. So I just completely ignored every text every call. And I tried to stay strong, even though I remember just looking at the screen in the texts, and sobbing and crying for hours. But I had to

just stay strong through it. And I'm glad I did. Because then I got into my first relationship with the other guy in person, my friend. And I think I just became really dependent on him because I was excited that the guy on line was wrong. And I was able to start gaining more confidence in myself. So at this point, it's around September of 2019. And like I said, My confidence is really building. So I've never done anything with student council before, but I applied for a student body officer position. At the time I applied to be treasurer. I ran, gave a speech and I was running up against the senior which I was so nervous about. But I ended up winning and everything seemed to be going so much better, like anything that was traumatic with the guy online, seemed to just completely fade away. It seemed like I was so free. So things kept kind of rolling from September into November. And by November, I had almost completely forgotten about him. I didn't think about him and I felt so liberated to just be in a position of power again. In November, I signed up for my school's France trip because I had been taking French for about five years by then. And

29:41

things with my boyfriend were going pretty well. Sometime in November. He had this big problem with anxiety and he said he needed a break but after about a week he told me no I'm sorry I can't be with you anymore. And We, I say got back together, but we had never really broken up. So things just kept getting better with him and our relationship. December. Again, it was just all about me and him, we would hang out every weekend. And it just felt good to feel like I meant something to someone, and not just him. But my friends and we would all have fun together and weekends and breaks together like winter break. I remember the new years, I was the first time I had ever been invited to a New Year's party and had my New Year's kiss, I had friends there, I had actually just flown in from the airport because I spent Christmas in California with my dad's side of the family. But I flew in on New Year's Eve and then made it to the actual New Year's party where we just hung out throughout midnight didn't leave until 1am. And

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it was just

31:10

very sweet. And I felt like it was strange, because when I remembered myself during those times, I remember hardly even thinking about the guy online because everything just seemed so much more positive that I didn't have time to even think about negative things like that. So by February, everything was basically like at an all time high for me. I had great friends, I was doing Student Council, so I was speaking at some of the assemblies and I realized, somehow even though I was very anxious, most of it like I used to be so anxious when I talked to the guy online. I would get up there and I loved public speaking that was when I found my love for public speaking. My relationship was really strong. I had so many friends. And at some point towards the end of February, somewhere between mid and February, we hear about this new disease outbreak, and they were calling it the Coronavirus. My brother has always been extremely paranoid when it came to anything that would endanger someone's health. And when he heard about this, he was freaking out. And I thought it was something similar to the 2016 Ebola outbreak. And what happened there was they we heard that Ebola hadn't gotten into the United States. But there was probably about one case and then just from there. It never became a big deal. So I thought it would be similar thing where one person is reported with the case that it's fatal. And that

was it. So I thought he was just being crazy. And my boyfriend was definitely on the republican conservative side. Whereas I was a little bit more logic liberal, pretty moderate. But we had never thought about it. We both respected each other's political stance even if they were different. But he completely thought that like the whole Coronavirus thing was fake. And my brother was the complete opposite of the spectrum. So going into March, March, was probably the most important month of all of 2020 for me. And the reason why is just because this is when when things with the covid 19 pandemic started to pick up. So at the beginning of March, we had our junior year course selection do so the following year. And I remember I was really excited to take all of the hard classes that I wanted to. I'm super interested in STEM so science, technology, engineering and math. And I've been doing robotics for a long time and it was my dream to go into chemical engineering since that's what my dad did. So the following year, I planned to take AP US history, AP language and composition, AP chemistry, AP French honors physics, advanced weight training in honors precalculus. So obviously, it was a pretty large load of classes to take at once you know no study hall. Complete honors classes, it was going to be a tough year. But during my sophomore year, things were just going so well that I thought I could handle it. I had good friends, I had good grades, I had a good relationship. So I kept up, I was happy. So there's never a problem, I was always so motivated to do everything. Well, I put in my course selection, excited for the year. And right at the end of actually, the day, that course selections were due. We got news that there was an extended spring break because of the covid 19 pandemic. And I just thought, Oh, that's a nice, we get an extended spring break. And our last day of school was March 13. It was a Friday, so Friday the 13th. And that was the day that I remember my boyfriend, he did swim and wrestling and

36:10

his swim season, which was about to start, he was devastated that this swim season had officially been canceled. And I remember I was sitting in study hall and kids around me were crying because their sports seasons were canceled, while others were so ecstatic to be having an extra extended spring break. So as we go into spring break, I thought, wow, this would be a great time to spend time with my boyfriend. Because if we had an extra week off, I thought I could see him much more. But my brother, on the other hand, was very, very paranoid about the pandemic. And he thought that it was getting going to get a lot worse. And by this point, there, we had face masks, and they weren't quite required yet. But they were heavily heavily recommended and would eventually become a mandate. So I personally didn't really believe in masks. And I think the main reason because of that was just because of my conservative boyfriend. He thought it was like one of those things like having forcing someone to wear a mask would be taking away their rights, and it should be their choice. And so I agreed with him because I think ever since my whole incident with some grown man online, I just felt like I had to agree with every other man in my life. So here, my parents started taking my brothers worries into account. And they got to them to where they thought, Well, what if it is serious. So I think we I saw my boyfriend on March 14, the day after a lockdown. But after that day, my parents had decided Nope, I wasn't allowed to leave the house anymore. I wasn't allowed to see him, we were going into quarantine. And at this point, I could not see my boyfriend. And he was not very happy about that since he didn't really believe in the pandemic. And I was just upset because I couldn't see him. And I thought, well, if it's just asked to and we're not like hanging around a lot of other people, it shouldn't have been a problem. But since we stopped seeing each other so much. We didn't see each other for the rest of like the next three ish three to four weeks. And that really made our relationship take a big turn. He also started

working as an essential worker at a grocery store. So he had less time to talk to me and you wouldn't be in a worse mood when he would come home from work. And we would do a little FaceTime dates, but for him, I don't think it was enough. And he is definitely more of a sexual person. And for me, I fall somewhere on the asexual scale. So I kind of just wanted to have quality time with him. And for him, he wanted more physical time, but my parents wouldn't let me leave the So that just didn't happen. So while he was busy working and I started to kind of stress about the health of our relationship Around this time, pop culture of quarantine means we're going crazy. I would binge watch Rick and Morty get really into our I had so much spare time now that I didn't have to go to school. So I picked up new hobbies like embroidery. I did my first oil paintings, while bingeing Rick and Morty Tick Tock was absolutely crazy, it was so popular, there was a popular dance, there was foods that were being tried, everyone around me was just picking up new hobbies and trying to fill in all of that spare time. Meanwhile, other people thought that the world was literally ending, there was this one period of time from like march to sometime in May, even where if you were to go into a grocery store, you couldn't go in unless you had a mask. And if you were to walk in there, the hand sanitizer Lysol wipes were completely gone. And you know, sometimes there would be a few cases. But what was really rare was, for some reason, toilet paper, toilet paper, I swear, you could not find it anywhere, there was a massive toilet paper shortage. And people were just buying as much toilet paper as they could for some reason. So because of the covid 19 pandemic,

41:49  
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41:50  
originated from China. So sometimes it's also referred to as the Wu Han virus, because that's where it originated. And somehow, it got associated with. So because of this, the covid 19 pandemic got associated with Asians. And I remember, on Instagram, I would see some people start to post about Asian violence where there would be videos online, of Asians getting brutally beat in the streets, or really harassed for having brought the COVID-19 virus into the US. And people were saying that it was their fault for bringing it in. So I, myself am 100%, Chinese, both my mom and my dad are from China. And I'm a first generation in the US. So hearing all of this was definitely disturbing to me. But my school's demographics at the time, was about 95% white, and the other 5% was either mixed white plus another race. And as far as Asians went, I am the only full, fully Asian kid in my grade. So when I tried to talk to other people about it, like tell them that it was kind of scary thinking about how those videos could be me. They didn't seem to understand and they didn't seem to not necessarily care. But it was one of those things like, Oh, yeah, that is scary, and then just kind of move on. So I contract to my story. In April of 2020. My relationship was getting a lot worse, I noticed how suddenly he would be so uninterested in me and I didn't blame him because I, I couldn't bring myself to be motivated. I wanted to lay in bed, I didn't want to leave my mattress. And every night when I go to bed, I've just told myself, if I were to fall asleep today and not wake up tomorrow, it didn't matter to me. And it felt like it didn't matter to anyone else either. But in April, as far as pop culture goes, a lot of people were trying to just do things to fill the time. And for me one of those things was before my hair used to be about somewhere between 18 to 20 something inches long. I had super super long hair that was actually honestly it was probably closer to 20 Ate if because it's definitely over two feet. So, I've always had super long hair and I just hated short hair until one day in April, I decided it's the start of a pandemic, it seems like we're



gonna be here for a while, school was declared completely online, and we would not be seeing our teachers in person. So I thought, no one's gonna see me, I might as well just cut it short. So I cut off about 10 or 11 inches. My hair was like, just about at my shoulders. And a lot of other people were cutting their hair too. If someone had to take away an interesting fact about the pandemic, it might just be that people were like, doing everything that they could at home that you would normally have to go out and do. So they would give themselves haircut, they would dye their own hair, things like that, because you couldn't go out everywhere was just closed, the only places that were open, or grocery stores, but other than that, every other business was closed. So you couldn't go to the salon. You couldn't even go out to bars or clubs, you couldn't go to schools, you couldn't go to gyms, everything just completely shut down, except for the quote, essential stores like grocery stores. So at this point, I remember hearing that the trip that I was planning to go on to France was canceled, I was upset about

46:37

that. In my relationship with my boyfriend wasn't great. But there was like some days where the we probably started seeing each other probably once every two weeks, which was better than nothing. And I remember towards the end of April, I started to feel hopeful again, I thought things were getting better. And but it really wouldn't last forever. So there was no reason to be down about it. And then, starting in May, I was getting so sick of the pandemic. So with everyone else, it was no longer fun. It was no longer extended spring break. And as online school continued. I started to feel trapped online again. And as you might be able to figure out I had this wasn't the first time I was in a situation where I was bound to the computer. And I started to feel like it was happening again, as we were feeling like Oh no. I'm right back with him. And I can't leave, I have no one. I didn't want to leave my bed. I didn't want to leave my closet, I would hide in there and worry about the rest of the world feeling like I was stuck to the computer. So that made online school. impossibly difficult. I just couldn't bring myself to sit down and try to focus because as soon as I would sit down, I would start doing my work. And five minutes later, I'm breathing fast and heavy having an anxiety attack. My eyes start watering and I feel all shaky. I just couldn't do my schoolwork and everything was just so much more difficult. I started to stop understanding things. And I just started stressing so much at the start of the pandemic. I'm about five feet tall. And I was probably around 106 pounds. By the end of April and the beginning of May. I had dropped down to about 92 pounds because I just didn't want to get out of bed I didn't want to eat. I felt unmotivated. I completely lost my drive. So as I started I was completely ready to just be done and go back to normal life. I was antsy everyone else was antsy. We wanted to get out. But I kept trying to go through with it. And you know, even if I struggled I had score to do Nonetheless, and even my school's traditions kept up. So there was new elections, I ran for the Vice President of our school, and ended up winning. And I thought that my relationship was improving. But it really wasn't. He had done therapy before for his anxiety. And he told me, hey, stuff, you seem to show signs of depression, like he told me, he remembered his therapist telling him the signs that he had. And he's like, you're like that, but worse, and I told them, don't be silly. I'm fine. Don't worry about me. I didn't want anyone to ever worry about me. I only my only job was to worry about them. And just be there to support them. I didn't want to burden them with me having problems that felt silly. But he told me take an online test. Why don't you think that? You know?

51:15

Like, what, what could be the worst that could happen? And I just thought, you know, sure, whatever online tests, I would take them, and then they would tell me Yep, you have severe depression. And I thought, it's an online test. How accurate could it be? And he said, even if it's not accurate, it's clear that you have at least minor depression, and I told him, you aren't a therapist. These online tests are just like a few short questions. They don't know me. I'm probably fine. I just have a hard time doing my schoolwork. complete denial, by the way. So going into June, I had already gone down to 82 pounds. I was the lightest I had been since middle school. And I remember I told my mom, mom, I'm only 82 pounds now. I have lost 22 pounds over just about four months. And she told me Well, when I was your age, I was this way. And when I was 30, I was 90 something pounds. I wasn't 100 pounds, until I was 36. And I told her Oh, so that doesn't change the fact that I've lost a lot of weight. And that seems unhealthy to me. And she said, No, I don't think you were ever 106 pounds. So it got completely looked over. And I just thought well, I guess that's that my parents don't care. So in June, I refused to get help for whatever was happening with me. And things with a pandemic were pretty much the same things were kind of opening up, we were allowed to be outside and maskless. But there were so many businesses closed. And there was this big BLM movement, BLM stands for Black Lives Matter. And I wanted to go to the protests, one of my friends is a absolute raging liberal, and she would absolutely right. And I thought, you know, of course, like, I definitely believed in equality. So I would have gone to the protest, other than the fact that I couldn't leave my bed and I couldn't leave the house. So at least June was my birthday month. And I thought, Oh, well, you know, at least is kind of nice. Like, I'll have my birthday and I get to see some friends because I'm sure my parents would have been lenient, and they were they let two of my girlfriends and my boyfriend come over. But I could tell during my birthday. My boyfriend was really off really distant. And I just thought that it was because he had a work right before and it was just a bad day. But then the day after my birthday the exact day after my birthday, my boyfriend broke up with me. And I was in just complete denial because He was the only person I was really allowed to see during the pandemic. So after being dependent on him for four months, and him being the only person that I talked to aside from my family, he was just gone. He didn't want to talk to me anymore. And I just completely spiraled into how I could cope with things. So in the following week, I remember, it feels pretty pathetic. But I would literally do research on how to get back for the next and I would talk to my dad about it at 4am in the morning. And every day, I started to stay up till 8am, just because I couldn't sleep, but I didn't want to sleep. But at the same time, when I did sleep, I didn't want to wake up. I think the reason that I avoid sleeping was because I dreaded that feeling when I woke up and realized that it was a new day. And then I had to get through another day. So if I just stayed up, then it felt like it was just all one day. So

56:16

things were just extremely depressing for me. But at some point, I realized that I couldn't live like that anymore. I couldn't depend on someone. And I couldn't just sit in bed and wish for it all to be over. Because the reality was that that wouldn't do anything, even if it was over, even if it was over, I would still be wishing the same thing.

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So

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fine July, I decided that I just need to be new person. And I still really wanted things to work out with my now ex boyfriend. So I remember some, like the fit, like the blogs that I would read, or the videos that I would watch, they would tell you just be interesting. Show him that you don't need him show him that you have a wonderful life without him and he's gonna want to be back in it. So my solution was, I started playing electric guitar because we both loved rock music. And I decided to start therapy. So after a little bit of therapy, I definitely definitely was diagnosed with a form of depression and anxiety. Looking back at it, it completely makes sense. She told me about how losing about 20% of my weight is definitely unhealthy and how I can help myself. And I remember towards the end of July, when I wasn't seeing progress with my ex, I want almost wanting to rebound and just have a random spontaneous relationship with some other guy just for a little bit. And then get back out with just make him jealous or something. But then I heard he went on a date with one of his co workers who just so happened to be someone that looks so much like me to the point where when I met some of his friends at work, they called me her name because they thought I was hurt. So that wasn't the best feeling. So in August, I was still doing therapy. And we started school Thursday, August 27. And it was online. It was on zoom, a website that's just all video. And I was pretty devastated about that. I was so like, done with technology. I didn't want anything to do with it anymore because it just made me feel so trapped. That reminded me of him. And I struggled. But I just I just had to get through it. So that was at the end of August that school started. And September was our first full month of online school. And my parents got a little bit easier about me hanging out with my friends. So that was the first time since before the pandemic that I got to hang out with my friends and my ex Was there and I thought, you know what? Yeah, we're broken up. But we were great friends. So let's just keep it friendly. And I saw him. And he decided to bring his new girlfriend to the party or not party, but like, hang out. And I saw her as she does look a lot like me, I go into later find out that he has some weird thing for Asians. So it almost makes me feel like he only dated me because of that reason. But I want to, I just want to change by September. And I didn't want to feel the way I felt about him anymore. I didn't want to want him anymore, especially after seeing him with her. And I didn't want to change, I want to know more zoom classes, I wanted to be back in person. It's kind of funny because I say I want to change by things to have not changed. So I,

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I really lost a sense of reality in September in September. I got into like, kind of not spiritual things, but sort of like, existential what mattered to me. And oddly enough, I sort of somehow developed a type of like, almost God complex, where I just thought that no one else existed, it was just me because To be fair, on zoom, I technically am the only real person in the room. So I definitely felt like everyone else was just exactly how I saw them on my computer screen. Because on my computer, there nothing about ones and zeros. So I just figured, well, that makes everyone else just intangible. So by October, I, October 2020, I just completely got a new identity. I wanted nothing to do with my ex, I was finally over him. And I started talking to some other guy that I was kind of interested in. But to be honest, I couldn't bother liking anyone else. I was really happy with myself. I mean, I hated being online. schoolwork was hard, like, exactly how it was way back in March. But I was happy with myself as a person. I looked at myself in the mirror, and I was happy with who I saw. I thought I was attractive. And you know, interesting for picking up guitar, I had hobbies now, I was taking hard classes. And I was vice president of the school. Things were just so much better for me, even if I struggled to do my schoolwork. But it was so early in the year that I was still going pretty strong on motivation. until November ish. By

November, things felt like they didn't matter. I was still very in love with myself. But I couldn't do my schoolwork. The more time I spent online. The more it reminded me of him and what it was like to be with Him every day. And if I had to sit in front of my computer for seven hours to go to school, it was the same thing. In fact, it was so much the same thing that even from December till currently right now. I just can't seem to find the motivation to do my schoolwork. In fact, right now, this is my AP US history final. And it is currently 3am and I'm sitting in my closet, recording this hoping that I don't wake up my parents. But either way, I just know that things are getting better right now. I have full vaccine right now currently fully vaccinated and things are looking up. I can't find the motivation to do my schoolwork. No, but that doesn't change the fact that I'm still very confident in myself and Now I'm currently the student body president of our school. I, I haven't dated anyone else. I don't want to because I think my self worth is too high to date someone else I I don't want to settle anymore. And I feel like I've learned a lot from it. The current pandemic, it's still going on. But recently, right now, it's may 25 2021. But pretty recently, the mask mandate had been lifted. So we're slowly going back to how things were before. And for me, I can just hope that I'll find the motivation to leave the bed again. Because as of now, nothing seems to make me want to get up and out. Not any other person and I can almost say why I think I just feel trapped again, just like I was with him. But I do feel optimistic about things getting better.