

My Covid 19

What has happened to us, individually and as a planet, confronting the pandemic of 2020 is simply too big to grasp. While certainly not the first global infection in history, it was the first one in which each and every day all of us had real time, and almost unavoidable, access to details and daily death and infection rates from around the globe in real time. When it began my world was geographically quite big. I had spent the better part of 2 years splitting my time between 3 of the most beautiful places in California. It was not uncommon for me to wake up in Los Angeles and go to bed in Berkeley or have breakfast in the Sierra Foothills, lunch in Oakland, and dinner in Hollywood. Even as a California boy, it was wanderlust plus.

The crashing down of covid was, in a sense, a game of duck, duck, goose. As the SIP orders became to come down I found myself closest and felt safest on the 40' 60 year old boat that had been my weekend getaway and my plan for someday. Almost overnight someday became today and 110 sf of living space became my home. At first it felt like an extended recess, time stolen, in a sense, from the very American need to go, go, go. As the weeks wore on however, my geographical world became considerably smaller. Instead of deciding between Santa Monica and San Francisco, I was deciding between 7-11 and CVS. My world became where I could walk instead of where I was off to next.

But, like many things, when the world became microcosmic, it became equally more interesting. Instead of the next thing, it became, the same thing. Everyday. But, like stopping to smell the

proverbial roses, I found that I was stopping to get to know the people in my suddenly small world. I had time, they had time, all of us who for decades have complained about not having enough of that resource found it plentiful, the cup that runneth over. So each human connection became more imbued with significance, each encounter had a moment that we did not, or thought we did not, have before. As weeks turned into months, it was people that became my covid. As quaint became routine, as routine became established and as my geographical world had become smaller, my world at least, became about certain people. Some of them were from way back, some just newly discovered, Covid made clear who my village was and instead of always the next thing it was the people right in front of me. Covid-19 became an experience in relationships, and allowed, if not imposed, the time for those relationships to grow.

So, that said, as I look back on the preceding months, Covid to me was and continues to be about people. When I look back on the 2020 pandemic, it is these people and interactions that I will recall. So, this is my cast of characters that populates my Covid - 19.

My Covid - 19

(names changed for a whole lotta reasons)

1. Lilith - SO much to say about her. She and I had been living the life of Riley for the past year. Not simple, but, astonishingly and unexpectedly deep. After a year of being together almost every hour of every day, we were 486 miles apart and had not unlatched

under the best of circumstances. It was not until I was left to my own devices that I realized how much (which was too much), I had depended and then expected too much on her. In her world she was managing an 18 year old rambunctious genius and 3 sometimes 4 jobs. Me? I would call her when I got up (for the first time) and tell (perhaps inflict on) her about me, my feelings, my dramas, my trivial concerns. I would do or not do anything I wanted and call her at any time for any reason. She never wavered, but I started to see my emotional greed. I was taking more than I was giving. Not that I didn't have pressures, but, I saw that if I stubbed my toe I would call her, if she had lost an arm she might bring it up a few days later....we're still figuring it out, but, the nickname for it for me forever will be "Love in a Time of Covid". As pressure mounted on all sides she simply refused to break. LA was burning down and she was taking time to hear about my, frankly, whatever. We are still a work in progress of sorts, but, I have never seen true selflessness before. It was remarkable.

2. Jen - My sister. She was the local news reporter from Arizona where the rest of my family lives. As covid went on and I ran out of stories to tell, I finally started listening to her. I had no idea about her actual life.....I do now.
3. Yo Yo - Lilith's daughter. I had been "mom's boyfriend" for a bit, but I got to see from a distance what young people and in this case a brilliant and precocious young person, experienced during this chapter. Some days it was glorious, some days it was disastrous. It was a reminder of what it is to be a teenager.

4. Eddie - My AA sponsor. When meetings stopped, lots (and lots) of drinking started, yet, this cat would call every few days and work with me. An unexpected gift.
5. Professor Bear - I had recently returned to college to pursue a second degree. With time on our hands we became not just student and teacher, but getting close to mentor and apprentice.
6. Elder - Owns the Best restaurant I never would have found without covid. A small business owner fighting like hell to keep his business alive, yet, never compromising on quality. The worse things got, the better his cooking got.
7. Younger - Elder's 5 yo daughter. Part of the daily routine became to stop by the restaurant and get a hug from her. Nothing will brighten up a day like a hug from a 5 year old.
8. Mario - I had walked to the store one evening and didn't want to walk back to the boat so I asked a gentleman for a ride. The remainder of that story will be a 3 picture epic to be released when movie theaters reopen
9. Jordan Peterson - Yes, that Peterson. I relied on so many of his podcasts to either boost me up or calm me down or simple pass the time
10. Christopher Hitchens - see #9
11. Mom - Every day, but, as the months wore on and there was less daily comings and goings to discuss we found a whole new level of our relationship
12. Dad - See #11
13. Allen - Oh the treasure of youth. He was the kid who worked the register at my local market, now he's a friend and, in a perfect world, maybe a business partner someday.

14. Simba - My favorite brain in the world, we went to college together and we are both insomniacs. Podcast coming soon ;)
15. CVS lady - She's happy one day and angry the next, but, I make sure I compliment her hair every time I go in to the store
16. East - Think Johnny Depp in Pirates of the Caribbean, the add 40 pounds and 20 years
17. El Diablo - There must be a villain in every good play
18. Mecca - Owner of store I shop and I get to learn one or two arabic phrases whenever I stop in
19. God - It seems trite, but, it has been anything but.

When I look back on 2020 I will not remember every detail of the news, riots, protest, politics, etc. I will remember these 19 people. They are my Covid - 19