

A Day in the Life of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2022 edition:

After two years of living in this pandemic, Dr. Kole de Peralta from Arizona State University, has asked me to ponder on how my day-to-day life has changed (or not changed) because of the pandemic. There are a handful of routine activities in a normal day that I will examine: dropping my daughter at school, conversations with my wife about her work, yard work, grocery shopping, my own workday, and extended family interactions. Several of these subjects I have reflected on before, but others I have not put much thought into.

Dropping my daughter off at school: Ignoring the early pandemic stage, i.e. online school for my daughter, for the last year my daughter has been attending middle school in person. Before the pandemic this was a simple task of getting into the car, driving, and dropping her off. However, the process has evolved into making sure that she has a mask or two on her, as until recently masks were mandatory. Multiple times we have had to run back home or to the store due to forgetting a mask. This had added another layer to our morning routine. However, I must note, she is a stellar example of selfless health consciousness. Even when she does not have to wear a mask, she is typically the one that will, even reminding me. Interestingly, masks are no longer mandatory in her school, yet she still wears them and complains about the kids who do not. While a daily routine was altered for our family, she also appears to group kids into masks wearers and non-mask wearers.

Conversations with my wife about her work: My wife is a 3rd grade teacher. Pre-pandemic she checked in occasionally with how her day was going, how the kids were behaving, or just to check on our dogs. Until last week, masks were still required at her school. As she works at a school for the deaf, this caused many communication and behavior issues. Most of our conversations have become about how difficult it is to sign to the children in her class without the necessary component of facial emotion for inflection or the equivalent of intonation. Or she will also discuss how the kids act about the masks. Ironically, when they removed the mask requirement last week, she then texted me that she felt vulnerable, even though she knew it was better for her and the kids' communication. While this obviously affected my wife more than me, the pandemic has changed how families talk about work and school. Rather than, "how was your day at school," questions changed to "did the kids wear masks and did anyone get isolated?"

Yard work: In late 2019 I developed a horrible sinus infection that caused eye issues and facial pain. I discovered later this was likely from trimming poisonous Oleander bushes without a mask on. I also routinely mowed the yard with no mask. I often had some form of face or nose pain before that, which looking back sounds idiotic. I likely would have worn a mask if I had one sitting around, but it always became an issue of realizing I needed one and lazily just wanting the work completed. However, as an "essential worker," my company supplied my family with an endless supply of masks. Today, now that masks are readily available, I find myself wearing them during yard work and my sinus issues have all but been eradicated.

Grocery Shopping: My family used to shop as a crew, now my wife and I take turns because of the pandemic and continue two years later. This has changed a weekly routine, but I am ok with it. Here is a link to a previous archive item that included this discussion. [Pandemic Dinner of Gluten-Free Orange](#)

[Chicken is a Sensory Reminder of Evolving Grocery Shopping and the Effect on My Mental Health · A Journal of the Plague Year · Covid-19 Archive](#)

My workday: A typical workday for me as a shift technician worker, pre-pandemic, would begin and end with a pass down meeting with our night shift. The meetings took place in one room with approximately ten people, in a central location. We would then cram as many people as would fit into golf carts and separate to four different factories for our workday. Additionally, we would sit at desks, perform routine maintenance, and assist each other throughout the day, all within cross proximity. After the pandemic, started people began getting sick and getting each other sick. I work in the semi-conductor industry and there was a parallel surge in demand for chips. Beyond just our health, it was apparent that if people were not separated, it was possible that our mega-site could negatively affect the global chip supply chain and my employer's bottom line. Thus, jobs like mine were made "essential" and safety rules were vastly improved. Other "non-essential" people began to work from home to make the site safer for essential work. Even today, we meet in four different control rooms rather than all in one room, with ¼ the people, wear masks unless eating, cannot ride more than one person in front and one person in the back of golf carts, and must perform complex maintenance tasks six feet apart and if this is not possible wear supplied air masks. While management may remove some of the safety regulations soon, things have become more complex at my job and manufacturing industries because of COVID-19. I also have to walk up to one to two miles a day due to golf cart rules, which is probably not a bad thing.

Extended family interactions: The pandemic is slowly waning. Rather than stopping by my parent's house or simply all agreeing to have dinner as a family for a birthday on a certain day, as it was before the pandemic, things have changed. My family spends a fair amount of time to discuss how everyone is feeling and if we should cancel before we meet if someone is sick. Thus, all our plans are much more complicated, and we find ourselves meeting up as a family less out of caution. COVID-19 has altered the type and frequency of my extended family's interactions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my days. However, it seems to me that I, and those around me, always adjust to situations that at first seem so stressful. Humans are highly adaptable, even to extremely spontaneous and stressful situations. Even more than we give credit to ourselves for. This exercise shows some things I had not even thought about, because I did not have a choice and just adjusted. Which is surprising because I am known as the biggest worrier!