

How I'm Baking and Drawing My Way Through Quarantine

When quarantine first started in March of 2020, I was really upset about having to stay home all day, and I was saddened and scared as I watched the death toll slowly climbing, thinking about all the people who were losing loved ones. However, on a personal level, the quarantine hasn't been as bad as I thought. After two weeks of lounging aimlessly around the house, I realized that I could use all this new free time to learn new things. First, I started trying to improve my drawing skills. I started watching endless drawing tutorials and began practicing various techniques trying to draw the furniture in my home. After drawing came baking, spending hours in the kitchen with my hands covered in flour and sugar. After a few embarrassing, burning mishaps, I perfected how to make korean scallion pancakes, fried rice, and pumpkin and apple pie.

When the new school year finally started, my school gave us a choice: do a hybrid learning schedule, or remain fully online. I decided to remain fully remote, because I was still fearful of potentially being exposed to Covid-19. This year, I haven't set foot inside the high school or met any of the teachers in person, but I see them and the classroom through my screen everyday. In most of my classes it's not difficult to participate, because we have a hand icon that we can use to answer questions and most of the teachers equally call on both online and in-class students. I think that the way they are educating us is effective and feels a lot like what it would be like if there was no pandemic.

As surprisingly easy as transitioning to online learning was, I am also dealing with the increased isolation that comes with not being able to make friends like I used to. Because I'm fully remote, I almost never have the chance to talk to my classmates. Even when we are left in a Zoom breakout room to discuss projects, it's awkward talking to students I don't know over video chat. There's no room to make friends or form connections, because we are all expected to focus on our work. Although I feel safer learning remotely, I do miss physically going to school. Interacting with the class though video chat just isn't the same. If I was able to form connections with classmates in person, maybe school would be better for me. I also would be more comfortable when we present projects, and talking in class in general.

It is in this way that the pandemic has affected me the most, yet I know that this is a minor inconvenience compared to what others are going through. My heart aches for the thousands of families who have lost loved ones to this disease, and the thousands more who have lost jobs and income due to the economy collapsing. I count my blessings that I have not lost anyone in my family, and that I can stay home, learn, draw, and bake. I only hope that things will improve, and we can all go back to our normal lives sooner rather than later.