

covid reflections for lawrence's 32nd birthday

we (in america at least) are moving into the next phase of our COVID reality. as vaccines roll out and spring arrives, people are turning their attention and plans back towards in-person connections.

but all of us are changed. and [some of us didn't make it](#).

if you know me well, you know i am a big fan of reflection. so to help me honor my 32nd birthday, my 2nd covid birthday, i'd love to end this day by reading your top pandemic reflections. please read the prompt and add your thoughts below. feel free to answer, one, two, or all three questions. short answers are v WELCOME!

the prompt: as we transition into this next phase of COVID life,

- **what has living in a pandemic taught you about yourself?**
- **what are you leaving behind?**
- **what life lessons are taking forward?**

feel free to sign your name on your thoughts or not. i'll get us started.

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- pandemic has taught me that my thriving is linked to, but not wholly dependent on external conditions. i am leaving behind frequent plane travel. a life lesson i'm taking forward is that america is grief avoidant af and that really keeps us from moving into the future. — lawrence barriner ii
 - Pandemic has taught me that I am able to be alone, even if I don't like it. I am leaving behind the old version of myself and i've learned that we are better if we take care of each other always.-emilia diamant
 - Pandemic has taught me how much I actually crave being around people and suck at being alone in terms of productivity and general happiness. I struggle to get ANYTHING done when I'm alone. Just FaceTiming a friend during the day gives me the drive to do something as simple as starting a load of laundry that I couldn't do before. It has also taught me that I'm probably too care-free; during the first week of lockdowns, I was riding my bike with my dog and fell on the sidewalk and got a pebble lodged into the side of my head. Lastly, empathy is hard! Even going through this pandemic together, people experience, internalize, and react to things SO differently. I think with this, my biggest takeaway is to learn how to be present with people, and to just be *with* them. -Tanner Cheek
 - **quarantine has taught me** a different relationship with my free time - that i get to choose how to use it. i guess that sounds super basic, but using it in ways that are nourishing rather than depleting is something i'm learning. i also think it's shifted my relationship to death. death, since the beginning of the pandemic has felt closer than it

has in a while (with the exception of the major earthquake here in 2017). i look toward buddhist teachings around this, and how meditating on death (on the realness of it) can help live more fully. the question of “if today was my last day, how would i live it?” feels ever-present. sometimes i relate to it with anxiety and sometimes it can be a liberating practice. **a lesson i’m taking forward** in light of the very obvious and utter failure of government (not just in the US) to support its people: that we’re in the process of cultivating diverse systems to support ourselves: mutual aid networks, healthcare support, crowdfunding, creatively supporting our collective mental health, continuing to organize to block the bad, organizing to create healing (HR40!), etc. i, like you, lawrence **am leaving behind** plane travel, long-distance tourism/vacations, looking to “power over” leadership, worldviews that don’t include visionary futures, relationships that don’t allow me to unfurl my wings. happy birthday 🍆💙💚💛🧡❤️ thanks for inviting us into reflection. - ari sahaḡún, writing you from tenochtitlán, mexico city

- Pandemic life has: reminded me how adaptable I am and we are; confirmed that I married the right man; forced me to ask big questions of myself; humbled my ambition. I’m leaving behind wearing clothes that aren’t comfortable. I’m taking forward the delight of local friends and knowing good card games :) CtK x
- I’ve learned that in times like these I fill all of my time trying to support others; that I feel powerful but fleeting inspiration to level up (learn new skills that have been beckoning me, get out of my own way emotionally/psychologically), but my neuroses are incredibly powerful and thwart that inspiration without a lot of intention. I feel more in touch with the truth that death will come, and with that I’m leaving behind an ounce of the shame I’ve carried with me - I’m feeling more driven to live than to hide for the first time I can remember. Life lessons still downloading. Grateful for you. KER <3
- Pandemic has taught me how very fortunate I am to like who I am. Solitude is much easier (if not joyful) when you’re at home with yourself. -EOL
- the power of disease is to be respected; modern medicine has made us apathetic -srg
- [Here](#) was my earliest reflection on living through a pandemic, I think I’m circling back to it. (heard about you through Felipe Witchger, been following your newsletter for a bit & love it; fellow guy turning 32 today living in Boston) - NDH
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