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## **Telecommuting and social engagement**

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**Relationship to EWU:** student

**Your experience during COVID-19:**

Shortly before my birthday in 2020 it seems like our world changed dramatically over night. We were suddenly thrown into an Orwellian apocalyptic future where human contact was frowned upon and "social distancing" was the new normal. I originally embraced this new normal because it was a huge break from the exhausting grind that has been my life since leaving high school, getting married, having two children, joining the military, and recently starting back at college. I could wake up shortly before I was supposed to start work and meander downstairs to my impromptu workstation made from a folding card table and login for the day. This also meant that all classes taken are all online and most asynchronous so I would not have to enter a classroom for over a year.

This continued for several months of painstaking bliss that was my new normal. After the nostalgia of sleeping in and lounging around had worn off I realized I had enjoyed the seeming break from life at home with the trials and tribulations of work, school, and any amount of social life that is had by "going out on the town" and began to long for any amount of human interaction that was not confined within my house. This may sound harsh to some, but I had heard this sentiment before from my wife but relayed in a different means. She often lamented to me that she needed outside engagement from other adults because as she was the caretaker of my children she only ever communicated with children and that left a social void that was not fulfilled.

Over the last year many things have changed and will likely remain changed, but I think our needs as social creatures remain the same, but our social engagement may never be the same. Likely, the social environment will be largely over the tangled webs of the internet and our children and grandchildren will need to learn the social skills to navigate those jungles.