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## **Busy Doing Nothing**

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## Busy Doing Nothing

It is difficult to describe my experience during the pandemic because it has evolved so much over the past year and a half that I struggle to keep it straight. At the beginning of the pandemic I was working as a nurse at Planned Parenthood. In the beginning we had a drop in patients which left us sitting around most days doing paperwork and cleaning, but then the rise in cases brought about panic and PPE regulations were enforced. I tried to work in clinic for a little while but then I was told I was too at risk based on my health conditions, so I transitioned to remote work. I managed to keep myself busy on my days off with exercising, drawing, painting and walking my dogs. After some time though, the loneliness set in since my partner was still working in the outside world and I fell into depression. Some days I found myself talking to the walls, other days I was screaming at my reflection in the mirror. You start to experience the sides of yourself you don't like very much when you are stuck inside and it can definitely lead to some paranoia.

As the pandemic became more prevalent and more precautions were put in place I found myself avoiding going outside completely and my depression grew even worse. I stopped exercising, stopped painting, and my partner and I started fighting more as he lost his job due to the pandemic so we were spending all our time together. My partner and I started fighting about the things we were discovering about each other and the I eventually had personal breakdown after having a miscarriage leading me to quit my job and going back to Arizona for a few months to stay with my parents. While I was there they convinced me to use this time to go back to school since it was all online. I had been working to save up enough money to go back to school after having to pay for my chemo treatments the last couple of years. Once I got back to Washington I applied to EWU right away and was accepted. This was the moment I started to feel like myself again and found something to be excited over.

Once winter quarter started I felt so much determination to make the most out of my free time. I threw myself into my school work and restarted my routine of walking my dogs. My partner was very supportive of me and tried his best to help me when I needed it. Online classes are so very different from in person. You do not form very close connections or connections at all with your peers, and I personally found myself butting heads with my professors. We all brought a bit of stress and anxiety to class, and it was difficult for us to adjust. Eventually I found my rhythm with my classes and peers, but I felt like I was missing something from the content. Many of my courses became "do-it-yourself" type curriculum where it felt like I was teaching myself, doing cut and dry assignments, and not being taught anything after. Not all classes were like this of course, I have had some fantastic teachers who have worked so hard to make online classes just as educational and enjoyable as in person. It can just be very stressful being

surrounded by your life and responsibilities while also trying to focus in class and on your assignments.

I might not be doing the activities I was in the beginning of the pandemic but my partner and I have started a weekly walk routine to get me some exposure to the outside. We also decided on working towards building a house so for fun I have drawn up 5 or more different floor plans. Life has smoothed out for us and has become more calm, but sadly I am still sick and cannot join my fellow classmates who are going back to in person classes. I am hoping that someday soon I can rejoin society. Even though I am disappointed about being in quarantine still, I am luckily that I can still take online classes and have something to give my life structure and joy while being trapped inside. Good luck to my fellow peers who are free from their prisons and get to enjoy the outside world again.

Below are some pictures of my dogs trying to get my attention while I was in class or doing homework. They are the biggest distractions of all time because they are adorable and noisy.



