

This pandemic has been truly an isolating experience. I am not married—and I don't have children. I live in New Jersey, the state with the second worst outbreak in the country. My boyfriend lives in New York in East Harlem with his mother, who is in her 80s. We have not seen each other for more than two months because it is dangerous for him to travel to New Jersey on public transit and his mother cannot be left alone. I've experienced food insecurity for the first time in my life. I used to order groceries via Instacart, which has become overwhelmed since the pandemic began to rev up. At first, I would stay up until 1 a.m. to get an appointment for food delivery. Then I was unable to get anything. My family sent me groceries from Atlanta, Ga. The town that I live in, New Brunswick, NJ (which is the home of Rutgers University) is like a ghost town—with all of the students, bars, and eateries shutdown. I can, literally, walk in the middle of the empty streets and not worry about a car. I recently started a new job, and my salary was reduced by 4% until January 2021. My commencement in May was cancelled, along with them twin sister's.

Despite all of this, I am so blessed. I used the all of the newfound time to double down on my studies. I was featured in a virtual panel at work, which boosted my profile despite being new on my job. I am saving so much money without the expensive, daily commute. I'm separated from my coworkers, but I'm also separated from office politics, overcrowded trains, and overpriced lunches in NYC. And I'm so happy to have a good, stable job in such a precarious environment. All of my loved ones are healthy, and so am I. I've never been happier to have healthy, ordinary days. Nowadays, I appreciate the everyday.