

4/28/2020

This morning I woke up around 3:30 am to use the restroom and couldn't go back to sleep. Usually when this happens, I'm able to return to sleep after a couple hours and set my alarm back 30 min. Today I had some energy and decided to get out of bed just before 5am. I put on an outfit that I am actually quite happy with. It's just a slightly different version of what I've been wearing almost every day, but it feels right today which made me think today will be a good day. I walked downstairs with my laptop, notebook and white sneakers all in hand. When I got to the kitchen, I put on said sneakers. For some reason wearing shoes in the house makes things feel more normal... even though it's 5am and still dark outside. Before this time (pre covid-19) I rarely wore shoes in the house unless I was too lazy to take them off after returning from an outside of the home adventure.

I drank some water and took my vitamins, like I do every morning. Then started making breakfast and coffee. During all of this I thought a lot about the previous night. This past week or two (time passing is difficult to measure these days), It has been harder or at least feels different. At the beginning of quarantine, first there I experienced shock and stress to realizing how long we might be staying at home. After that settled, I felt surprisingly good about my chances of staying sane during quarantine and positive about the change in normalcy we will have when this ends. But now, I have no idea what's going on it seems. Each day I feel a little different, but the same day happens... maybe. When I expressed this feeling to my mom last night, she said it's like Groundhog Day except Covid-19 day. Over and over and over. (I've noticed many making this connection recently, which is pretty neat. [I like this reference](#))

I'm beginning to feel like I'm on an island and there's no way back to shore. My parents house being the island, maybe my parents, Artie, Juno (the two pups) and I are like the Gilligan's Island cast?? I also feel like Danville, where I'm currently quarantined, is a staged movie set and no one can leave. Kind of like that movie with you know that one actor (ill look this up) except everyone besides those on TV are being tricked...

Basically, all of this feels surreal and there's no certain way to visualize how we are going to get out of this and how life will be once it's over. Honestly, even if things when straight back to normal I'm not sure I'd be able to live that way.. It feels too far in the past and I can't imagine myself pre Covid-19 or post Covid-19. It's almost an alien feeling and as many have said, these are weird times.

Back to last night. In our restlessness, after completing one long walk for the day and shamelessly finishing two bottles of wine before the sun went down, my mom the pups and I went for another walk. We walked less than a block from home and passed the playground I grew up next to, we walk by it almost every walk we go on... My mom suggested we go on another walk, so happy she did.

My mom said "shall we let the dogs run loose in the playground"? The dogs have been heavily restless too, I think they are getting sick of being the only dogs each other plays with daily. So, we did. Best idea of the day. They loved it. They got their energy out, felt joyful, enjoyed the change of scenery and a new place to play. I enjoyed it just as much. I immediately jumped on the swing, swinging was one of my favorite activities as a kid. It felt so freeing and I began to remember all the games I use to play with myself, my brothers and my friends on this playground. It has changed some since I was young but the swing set, and the plastic dinosaurs are the same (the dinosaurs weren't always there, but they appeared sometime in my youth when it was still fun/acceptable to get lost in the playground for a day). I used to play hot lava with the all the playground equipment. I would swing as high as I could, and jump

onto one of the dinosaurs then continue jumping onto the other equipment until I made it back to the swing set. Honestly, I must have been a bit crazy to do this, and how did I not severely hurt myself? Last night, a part of me wanted to try but I thought we better not risk a trip to the ER. I settled for a few normal jumps off the swing. It was fun to feel like child me again.

While we were there, I reminisced about the hours and multiple days I would spend playing this game. I remembered other activities I used to do as well. The creative games, challenges and make-believe fantasies I would play to occupy my time. It was so much fun just to be there last night; to be swinging, playing with the pups and thinking joyful thoughts. A night that was mediocre and full of restlessness suddenly became one of the best nights of this quarantine. It was all because I let loose on the playground and enjoyed exactly what was in front of us, just half a block away from home.

(There are some safety issues with playing at playgrounds right now. I will note that this one is rarely used unless pre-school or Sunday school is in session because it belongs to the Baptist Church on West Lexington avenue. Neither of which are gathering now so no one is using it and we made sure to wash our hands very well upon returning home).

This morning, thinking about the night before made me think, what can I learn from child Mary to help get through this time?

A few thoughts came to mind. Play time. Can I learn from play time? Just to be free and creative or complacent. Sometimes I played the same game for a week, or just a day, sometimes I got bored of something and instead of sticking to an activity I'm not all that interested in, I would do something else. Child Mary would tell current Mary to let your free time be play time, get creative with what's in front of you – don't be afraid to let loose and not act your age, but if you want to take a nap and watch Netflix. That's okay too.

I also think the day to day was more in our minds as children, rather than the month to month or year to year. Only the day in front of us or just a few days ahead mattered in the moment. Unless a big birthday, holiday or vacation was coming up, I think we just thought about the time directly in front of us. Child Mary would tell current Mary to take it day by day and do the best you can with each day – no high expectations or unnecessary planning.

When we were kids, being grown up felt so far away so even though I fantasized, it wasn't time for that part of my life to take pursuit. I was okay with dreaming about the multiple possibilities of the future, and I let myself imagine many, but when it would happen and how were not of concern because it wasn't the right time to be grown up. It is similar to today, because now is not the right time to be concerned with the when and how of tomorrow. No one really knows so multiple ideas are needed. Child me wants to tell current me, it's okay to dream and think, but the multiple possibilities of how after this time will unravel when the time is right so don't focus too much on that now and continue to allow the scientists, medical professionals, essential workers and the respectable government leaders do their job well (by social distancing, listening to them and respecting them).

Child Mary might have some good advice. We will see. Now I'm going to drink some more coffee and watch the latest Seth Meyers (sorry mom I promise I'll rewatch it with you again and again) and enjoy this time in front of me, while the sun is just about to rise, and then I'll stick to my 9am schedule of

doing the activities that allow me to earn some money and shape my career life, whatever that is going to become... and tonight I'll let loose or nap during my play time.

Stay healthy, safe and groovy, my friends!