



A Letter To Our Children In The Throes Of The Coronavirus Pandemic

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Life as we know it has changed so incredibly much over the past couple of weeks. You lost your freedom to come and go as you please. You lost your fundamental right to go to school and directly interact with your friends.

Some of you who are having occasions and milestones approaching are losing your ability to celebrate the way in which you deserve to be celebrated.

You finally have permission to say "it's not fair." It isn't fair for you to be denied all of this and more.

As parents it breaks our hearts to see you so uncomfortable. It's typical to have cabin fever and want to break the rules to go visit with friends and hang out like you usually do.

We're struggling with which rules to set given that you're so compromised already. You may be using your technology more, going to bed later, and taking on a lax attitude. Who could blame you? We're all collectively going stir crazy.

We're sorry that you have had to experience such adversity in your lifetimes. Sadly, it tends to be around your safety and security. Between school shootings, the higher rates of mental health challenges which increased the suicide rates among you, and now this, a pandemic of astronomical proportions.

Just when you stop worrying about whether you're in danger, your safety is compromised yet again. Your stress response is being continually activated. You don't get a chance to recover from your previous fears or concerns. That's likely to wreak havoc on your health and nervous system, and in so many other fundamental ways. As a parent it's so unsettling and provokes such helpless feelings within us that we can't secure that safety for you. We would do anything to secure a stable and safe world around you.

Who could blame you for going to Florida to party for Spring break as to not face this reality, we, as adults, could hardly face it ourselves. Every day the numbers of those infected go up, every day more people die, every day more people suffer. Not only here but around the world. It's in our face 24/7. You get pop ups on your social media. The constant reminder is bound to make it even more worrisome for you.

We're all forced to consider our own health but also the well-being of others. It's sad that you may be worrying about your grandparent or an immunocompromised person in your family or in someone else's family that you know of. We wish you didn't have to carry such a heavy load of worries for someone your age.

You hear about the financial market and how it's impacting our economy. Are we in another recession or are we headed into another Great Depression? Genuine source of instability for almost everyone. We worry for your future and what will be. It's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel given how

quickly everything is progressing.

Here in the US, some states are on lockdown, while others aren't. In other countries, they're taking proactive and drastic measures and are locking down the entire country. We know you don't get why things are so disjointed, either do we.

We know that you're fearful of the inevitable and are concerned that this will prolong things. It frustrates and angers us that there's such disorganization and that you're feeling destabilized. We share in the worry that we could be in this for an extended period of time.

You worry about your immediate future as most kids do. Some of you are worrying whether you'll return to school, have a typical Summer, and when you'll get to spend time with your friends again. The ambiguity is so daunting for all of us.

Some of you are worrying whether you'll have a prom, and all the traditions that go along with it, have graduation, get to have closure with your high school friends, have a healthy transition to college, or will be able to attend college in the Fall all together.

Some of you sadly lost that opportunity. You were abruptly asked to leave college and take your belongings, or you were told you would receive your things in several weeks and have to endure strangers going through your personal property which can feel like such a violation.

The gloom of no graduation, no graduation party, no graduation trip, no closure with friends, ending school with online learning, and after waiting so long and working so hard, no momentous celebration. It's so incredibly distressing to us that you're leaving on this note and will forever have this memory embedded in your mind.

The hurt runs deep. As parents, we were looking forward to having this meaningful experience with you. You deserve to feel great joy for all your accomplishments, and you were unfortunately and sadly denied that. There are words that can take away your frustration, disappointment, or sadness. We wish we could make it up to you. We can't, no one can. We all just must sit in our sorrow. It's so incredibly painful.

We understand that there are also future worries regarding when this will end, whether we'll be able to get our basic needs met, such as if there will be enough food in the supermarkets for all of us, and also questioning whether we'll eventually run out of things to do and become even more bored than we already are.

While all of this is so unsettling because of the unknown, let's try our best to grow through this process so we can strengthen the belief that we could get through anything that comes our way. Life is full of adversity and challenges, and we need to be ready for anything at any time. It contributes to our confidence, resilience, and personal strength.

Let's try our best to express our feelings to each other, rather than act out of our feelings of fear, frustration, disappointment, and sadness. Let's try to be mindful and in the present moment and notice what is, which is all we truly know, rather than predicting what will be.

Lastly, let's be appreciative of what we do have and what we have learned through this process. Let's be grateful for our freedom, valuing the life and well-being of ourselves and others, and that as a community we can unite, support one another, and form a greater whole. Let's make it a point together to never take these things for granted ever again.



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