

POSITIVITY IN ISOLATION

I flew home from Antigua to Rhode Island, USA and was in self-quarantine for 14 days. I didn't change my daily habits much after the 14 days were up! Here's why:

By Erica Lush



1

COMMUNITY HEALTH

The obvious and most IMPORTANT reason is that during the pandemic, being physically separate from my community was essential to everyone's health, and in many places this is still the case. I am not particularly nervous about contracting the virus, but I do not want to spread it. When I think of all the people I would love to spend quality time with right now, I couple that with thoughts of how gutted I would be if they fell ill. By switching my perspective, I am able to shift from loneliness to gratitude.

2

SOLITUDE WITHOUT FOMO

Spending time alone was not something I normally made time for; I always felt I'm missing out when I opt to stay in. The catch is that I never recharge unless I take that personal time. This is like a forced recharge. Not only have I continued to satiate that part of my personality, I'm able to dive back into the interests I have pushed aside as a result of a hectic lifestyle. I'm still taking time to reconnect with a part of me that loves to create, imagine, and share.

3

MAINTAINING A NEW ROUTINE

It didn't take long to inundate myself with things I wanted to do.

In order to accomplish anything at all, I broke down my interests into categories: Practical (taxes, find an apartment), Creative & Nurturing (plant seeds, practice yoga, read, draw), and Projects I'm dying to work on (edit interviews, brush up on Arabic, learn video editing). Then I set goals each day that still allow room for play. I still spend time on two of these categories every day. It's not such a big daily requirement, but it helps me look back at the end of a week with satisfaction.

Having a routine also helps to bring joy into my day I might otherwise leave out. I'm watching the seeds I planted begin to pop through the earth. I noticed precious pieces of an interview I would have overlooked. I'm challenging my body every day, thanks to a yoga challenge that Mackenna teamed up with me to do. Was I delighting in things like this before?

4

QUALITY TIME WITH LOVED ONES

Some days I do actually have human contact! One morning I chatted with my friend for an hour on the phone as though we were sitting beside each other, and it was glorious. I caught up with my old boss and mentor. We talked about his kids, his tortoise, and their bad track record with pet fish. A video-chat with our on-board reporter Amalia meant playing virtual fetch with her dog, a tour of their backyard, and introductions to the family. I learned more about Amalia through a 30-minute video chat in her childhood home than I had in the whole last month we were working together. As it turns out, it's entirely possible to deepen your relationships during difficult times. All you have to do is reach out, and I have enjoyed continuing to do so.

5

IT'S ALL RELATIVE

When I think of solitude I have to think of solo sailors. My dad is one of them, and his first solo Atlantic crossing – with no GPS and little experience – took him a bind-boggling 56 days. His only human interaction was talking to passing ships on a VHF, if they could pick up his signal. Even today's solo sailors are able to write emails and even make phone calls at sea. The type of isolation I experienced in self-quarantine is in contrast massively social! I can call friends anywhere in the world at a moment's notice, and what's more, with the pandemic I can expect them to pick up!

6

REFLECTION AND ANTICIPATION

Despite being completely alone for nearly two weeks at the start of the pandemic, I have rarely felt lonely. I loved this solitude. This has been a wonderful opportunity to reflect on over a year spent with Maiden: the adventures we've had and challenges we've overcome as a team. It's a chance for our excitement about the future to grow as we look forward to hitting the water once again! In the meantime, I'm cherishing the opportunity that quarantine has given me. I'm going to walk out on the other side a little more whole than I was to begin with. When I look back I hope I'll remember to continue this practice of enjoying solitude. And when I step forwards - I'm going to give the biggest hugs.