

Six feet apart but Six feet closer

There are 20 cracks in my ceiling above my bed, some narrow and thin barely visible unless you look hard enough while others deep with the jagged edge sticking out practically announcing it would crumble at the slightest touch. They spread and connect like veins on the arm and my eyes can trace through them a hundred times like a pattern ingrained in my mind the same neurons firing every time. You're probably wondering what's the big deal with me and the cracks on my ceiling because so far it seems I've got a major vendetta against them. No, the cracks on my ceiling don't boil my blood or make me itch to see them, it's quite the opposite. I never even noticed they were there until quarantine. Might find this surprising but it's not on my regular schedule to stare at my ceiling and count the cracks I find in it. I've found with quarantine that I had a lot of empty time hence time to think. Time I didn't have before that through quarantine seemed to only keep slipping out of grasp like it was dripping through the crevices of my mind. So as I stared at my ceiling while time slipped away I noticed things I hadn't ever before. The cracks on my ceiling had always been there. I just had never paid attention to them before and I feel the same thing could apply to many things in my life. Most of the time we can be blind to the cracks in our life, neglecting them because they don't demand our attention. Instead, we are distracted by our busy schedules and constant reminders dinging off in our head.

Quarantine has forced me to slow down from my constantly packed schedule and focus on myself. This is new for me because as much as you should make time for yourself I haven't done so before the quarantine. It would always be prioritizing someone or something else before myself whether that be school, clubs, friends, etc. I sacrificed the time for all these other things but never for myself. So with quarantine and all this newfound time I had got the chance to be

with myself, relearn myself, reconnect with the parts of me I had buried or neglected and heal those cracks I had yet to acknowledge. It made me reopen wounds because all I could do was think with the free time. So the thoughts I avoided thinking about had all the chance to come through and with barely anything to distract myself with the best choice I had was to face them. This time to focus on me only brought growth to my life. Although quarantine did become lonely at times where I couldn't see my friends I got to make more of a friend in myself. To cherish this time by myself more, that past me would have seen as unnecessary. The times I couldn't go out made me rebuild the love in the things I hadn't done in a long time like drawing and reading. I think not only did it help me grow my relationship with myself but with my family, friends and address the cracks I had in some of my relationship with others. You don't realize who's there for you until you are put through difficult times and this quarantine helped to open my eyes to who those people were and appreciate them more.

Due to quarantine I also got to reconnect with my brother through our mutual hobby of drawing and have moments that wouldn't have occurred if not due for us being stuck in the house together. It made me appreciate my family like my brother a lot more especially because just as unpredictable this quarantine was so is my time with them. Seeing the stories of loss around me and experiencing a loss in my own family allowed me to digest the sickening reality that the people I love aren't guaranteed forever, so I need to appreciate them while they're still here now. This time of mask, quarantine, and sickness is saddening and isolating, but like my own community and many others, they have not allowed it to sever the connection between people but actually drive to make it stronger. To come up with ways to still continue life and make the most out of the cards we've been handed. It has made us reach our hands to people we may not have before and build a strength to keep fighting. To cheer on all the hard-working

essential workers, nurses, doctors, the people we are depending on right now to keep fighting. This quarantine has helped me to grow a deeper connection with myself, my loved ones, and I feel strengthened the connection within our community despite the negatives. We may have been drawn six feet apart but we've only grown six feet closer.