

# Smiling with the New Normal

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## Reflection

As COVID continues to spread relentlessly with nothing concrete to stop it, it has definitely tapped into facets of humanity that were perhaps hidden in the daily pandemonium. First and foremost, I appreciate the healthcare workers and their selfless attitude and efforts. It is challenging both mentally and physically to care for patients during the pandemic, while pushing the fear and worry of contracting the disease themselves aside. While serving patients who are scared and deteriorating, they have not forgotten to establish a human connection with the patients by using nicknames and smiling pictures of themselves on their PPE[1]. Alongside frontline workers, people that are staying home and working extra hours to provide remote services should also be appreciated. Essential services are being made more convenient such as curb-side grocery deliveries and access to telehealth. Younger people are stepping in to help seniors who are more vulnerable to COVID. It both a moment of humility and pride for me to see students in the healthcare profession taking out time to assist emotionally, not just physically. Everyone is really trying to follow rules and regulations but help out as much as they can and it's truly commendable.

Reflecting on the past few months, the importance and power of human connection touched me the most. Establishing genuine connections with any patient in a healthcare facility has a huge impact on them. As seen in the video, Tim Engberg, describes how lonely a patient actually feels in a hospital setting. He mentions that he felt as if he was removed from the human race [2]. The feeling of having no family, no friends, no one to talk to is a hopeless and devastating feeling. As future healthcare professionals, it is extremely important to establish this therapeutic alliance in order to instil mental stability and calmness in patients.

Personally, I have found that this is the perfect time for further self-discovery. Self-discovery helps identify hidden abilities, passions, truths and places for improvement. In lieu of this, I've decided to tread some paths that I didn't have time to walk on. Our day-to-day schedules tend to have a mechanical undertone to them, and I believe the current situation allows us to break from that and live a new normal. As an arts and crafts lover, I have found time to learn new painting techniques and explore artistic creativity such as quilting. I couldn't recall the last time I relaxed with a novel in hand, flipping the pages and losing myself to a world of words without worrying about a task list. I allowed myself more breaks, more baking, more family time and more personal health care. I believe that amidst this crisis, if we want to, there is so much we can learn, discover and re-discover. We just have to give ourselves the chance. The way I take care of myself in this pandemic is to remind myself how lucky I am to have a happy list- safety, security, family, friends, no pressures and a positive outlook to make the best of the time I have to be productive, acquire new skills and keep smiling.

## References

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