

# Quarantzine

Stories from quarantine

Issue #1  
April 2020

# #quarantzine

Quarantzine was created remotely and interviews were conducted via email, video call and social media.

Photos were submitted by contributors, who were given an open brief to share snapshots of their quarantine experience.

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**Cover design**

Inspired by the International  
Maritime Signal Flag 'Lima',  
which is flown from ships at  
sea placed under quarantine.





**It's April 18, 2020. An extraordinary time as millions of people around the world are in some form of quarantine. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises those in isolation to "Try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines", and to "Keep things in perspective." While we are living through the coronavirus crisis together, the impact of quarantine is different for each one of us. In this issue, those we hear from include a teacher in New York City, delivering personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers in her community; a photographer in Kuwait who is shooting from his window; and a travelling couple staying put in their campervan in an Argentinian woodland. By uncovering these unique perspectives, we're reminded that there is no right or wrong or *normal* way to deal with quarantine. And that every emotion we experience, from fear to loneliness to contentment, is valid as we try to navigate through the uncertainty. After all, what makes us different is what makes us human.**

**— Gemma Suyat**

# Stories from quarantine

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# Pivoting during the crisis



— I don't drink coffee at home, but it has become a daily habit and is taking over my desk.



**Andre Chanco**

Coffee Maker

Serangoon, Singapore

Instagram: @stripedshirt

**How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

First and foremost, I've lost track of weekends and weekdays. Being a business owner the segregation was blurry to begin with, but now it's greyer than grey. I'm learning how to create routines where there used to be none; set boundaries and list down my daily priorities. I tend to overwork so I'm getting less rest now. Prior, there was the gym to go to as an excuse to disconnect. As the days go by it seems to be more unusually usual.

**What's been keeping you busy?**

Work's keeping me busy, which I split into two businesses: Yardstick (@yardstickcoffee on Instagram) and Morning (@drinkmorning on Instagram). Both present different challenges. The Yardstick retail and wholesale business in Manila, Philippines, have been affected by the lockdown so we've been continually trying new things, failing at most, but quickly adapting. Whereas with Morning we're able to work remotely because the company has been set up that way. Both are very challenging, yet these obstacles are invigorating.

**— I'm learning how to create routines where there used to be none, set boundaries and list down my daily priorities.**

**The place you miss the most?**

I miss the gym because it guaranteed me at least an hour a day of being able to create some mind space.

that I need to write down notes more. I tend to take screenshots or just take a mental note, but writing down things helps to organise my mind.

**Who do you miss the most?**

I miss my parents even though we live near each other. We're trying our best to follow social distancing rules to ensure that everyone does their part for the greater good.

**First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

Eat a family-style Filipino meal with my wife and parents.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

To be super resourceful – whether it was trying to solve work-related problems or finding different ways to make our home stash of instant noodles taste different every time we prepared one. Another thing that I've realised about myself is

**Favourite lockdown challenge?**

A challenge that we started but unfortunately did not take off, haha: #CoffeeFlightChallenge. It's a photo contest where you pick up your favourite mug and jump.

**Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

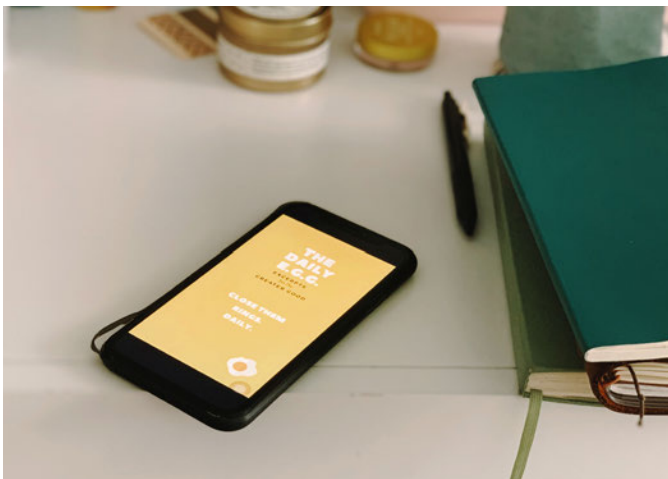
'Muji' playlist by Rony Lee.



— Thankfully, my wife found these instant noodles. She learned about them from David Chang and Chris Ying.



— I have never put out so much content than compared to the past four weeks.



— Each day I share an extract for the greater good as an outlet on my Instagram profile.

**— I miss the gym  
because it guaranteed  
me at least an hour a day  
of being able to create  
some mind space.**



— I decided to pick up *Figures of Speech* (Special Edition) a day before the lockdown as creative input for my brain for the next month.

# Longing for the road and the rocks

## **Katie Parsons and Alberto Silvestrini**

Van—lifers and rock climbers

Lago Puelo, Argentina.

Instagram: @climbtheamericas

### **How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

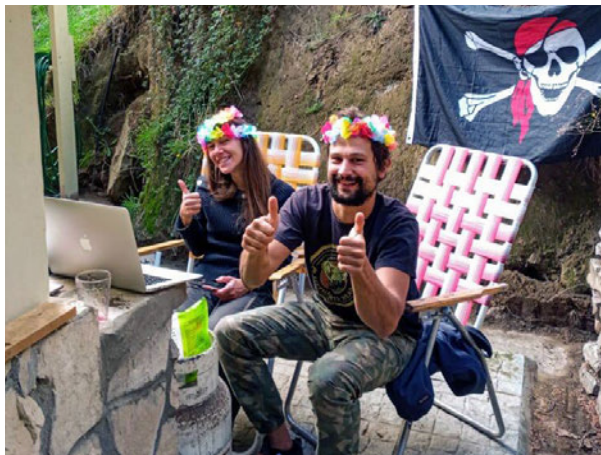
**Katie & Alberto:** We were travelling in our campervan through Patagonia, headed south. We were forced to stop travelling and to stay in this location for lockdown, in accordance with the Argentine government. So we're now living in our campervan in a woodland owned by our new Argentinian friends, just off the iconic Ruta 40. As tourists we can't enter the village or shops. We aren't allowed to drive anywhere. Nonetheless, we are enjoying the time as a small and self-sufficient community of six people and are thankful that we have company in lockdown.







— Katie enjoying the van life.



— Tuning in virtually for our friend Stefano's birthday party.



— Playing cards, sitting in the woods.





— Katie climbing the boulders.



— Border crossing between villages, Alberto is checked for the virus.

**— As tourists,  
we can't enter the  
village or shops.  
We aren't allowed  
to drive anywhere.**



— Border crossing between villages, Katie is checked for the virus.





— Alberto climbing the boulders.

— We found rocks in the woods and have cleaned them and made some awesome bouldering routes.

**What's been keeping you busy?**

**Katie & Alberto:** We've been cooking, using mostly the produce from the land. We found rocks in the woods and have cleaned them and made some awesome bouldering routes. We teach people to knit, cut hair, play lots of scopa (a traditional Italian card game), read, draw and do yoga and strength training.

**The place you miss the most?**

**K & A:** The road and the rocks.

**Who do you miss the most?**

**K & A:** Our family and friends.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

**K:** I'm very resourceful.

**A:** I can boulder too.

**First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

**K & A:** Hit the road and go see the penguins! And climb bigger rocks.

**Favourite lockdown challenge?**

**K & A:** Finishing our bouldering projects and learning and practising the Spanish language. We are forced every day to speak the local language.

**Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

**K:** 'Everyday' by Buddy Holly.

**A:** 'Notti Magiche' of Italia '90 World Cup. An Argentine couple played it after we won a very intense card game.



— Our campervan parked on the front of our new friends' house.





# Learning to love me

## Deirdre Levy

Teacher

New York, United States

Instagram @therealdeirdrelevy

### How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?

In the beginning it was very sad and lonely. I experienced a break-up with my fiancé right before COVID-19 became serious in New York. I recently lost two colleagues – a grade team teacher and my former paraprofessional. It hasn't been easy to deal with loss, but I've been managing every day. I've met new friends through social distancing, got a new dog, and always think about new opportunities.

### What's been keeping you busy?

Being a teacher has kept me very busy. We've been told to become virtual teachers with no prior experience. Thankfully, I feel comfortable with technology, but I know that a lot of teachers may not feel the same. I'm also delivering with Mask Our Heroes

— we provide personal protective equipment to frontline workers in New York. I've teamed up with Lugao Kasberg to create @NYCheroes on Instagram to document the stories of heroes in the city and spread some joy during this pandemic.

### The place you miss the most?

All the yummy restaurants that I would normally visit. I love good food and supporting my favourite people. I really miss Sid Gold's piano bar in Chelsea, where I used to sing for fun in front of complete strangers.

### Who do you miss the most?

My grandma. She is going to be 98 this year and lives in California. Thankfully, she is only a FaceTime call away, but it's best to remain far away for her safety.





— I'm a member of the Park Slope Food Coop and help stock fruit and bulk items for the store.

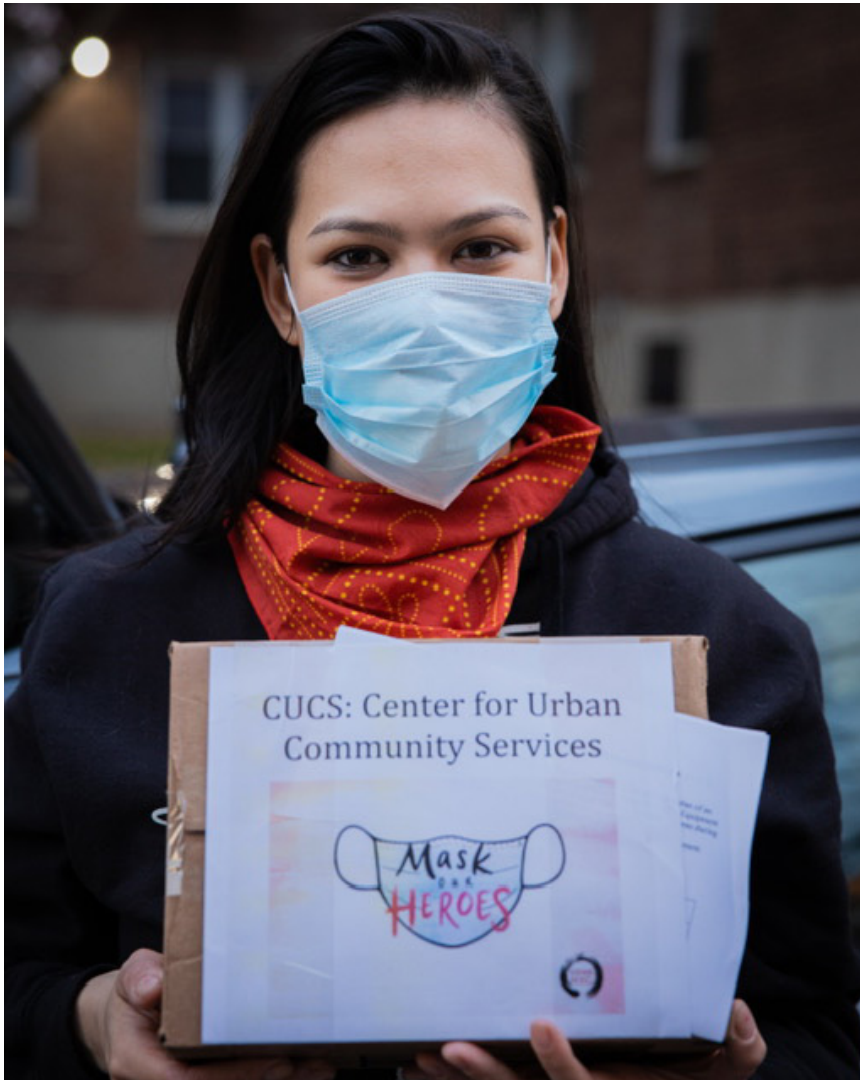




— Lugao Kasberg and I delivered personal protective equipment to Genaro Hernandez, a frontline physicians assistant, working in the SICU COVID-19 Unit at the Manhattan VA hospital.







— Providing personal protective equipment to New Yorkers on the frontline with Mask Our Heroes.

**— I've met new friends through social distancing, got a new dog and always think about new opportunities.**

**What have you learned about yourself?**

I have a lot to offer. I have always struggled with self-esteem issues and being by myself. Now being with my dog I realise that I'm a good person that deserves a lot in life. My dog has been my 24-hour bodyguard and he treats me like a queen. His first owner named him King so he really does live up to his name.

**First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

I think I want to book a trip, anywhere. Maybe Israel to see my family? Or visit my favourite restaurant in New York; Serendipity 3 (a restaurant specialising in desserts) and order a chocolate sundae just for me.

**Favourite lockdown challenge?**

My former colleagues from a school I used to teach at invited me to join them in a 'No Rush' challenge, where they compiled a video of us not rushing, and sharing a snapshot from being not ready, to ready, for school. It was fun.

**Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

Lizzo Radio. She's taught me to love myself first before giving love to others.



— My dog King Cudi, as named by my students.

# Through the lens of my window

**Aidan Brooks**

Photographer

Salmiya, Kuwait.

Instagram: @aidan\_brooks

## **How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

Late last year I made a major life decision and moved to Kuwait to work as a full-time photographer for a cultural centre, leaving behind my life as a freelance photographer in London. Having just settled into my new life, in early March shortly after the COVID-19 outbreak, Kuwait announced a national holiday and closed all public buildings (including my workplace) to curb the spread of the virus. They then closed the airport, one of the first countries to do so, and introduced a curfew in the evenings. I'm in lockdown in my apartment and photographing anything for work is out of the question.

## **What's been keeping you busy?**

I decided to try and use this time to work on a personal project (as well as working on edits for work). I have been photographing scenes from out of my window each day. I'm lucky to have recently moved to an apartment which overlooks a beach and the Persian Gulf. So I've been trying to capture the scenes of people through the limited perspective of my window frame. It's been interesting to watch people attempt to keep (or not keep!) social distance and watch the curfew kick in as police cars rush down the road. Most of all it's been beautifully peaceful to watch the world go by, listen to the sea and watch the weather change – I've found it meditative.

## **The place you miss the most?**

There isn't one place that I really miss the most. It's the realisation that this is the new normal, and I miss the freedom I took for granted.

## **Who do you miss the most?**

My partner still lives in the UK, so I'm coming to terms with the fact that I won't be seeing him for a while, along with my family. However, I'm grateful that I can safely isolate myself here and admire frontline workers who put themselves at risk every day to keep us safe.





— Workers dressed in yellow overalls clean the beach from seaweed after a couple of days of bad weather.

### **What have you learned about yourself?**

It's a strange and scary time for all of us so I'm trying to remind myself not to feel pressure to be creative during this lockdown. It's okay to not be at my most productive when there's a world-wide pandemic!

### **First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

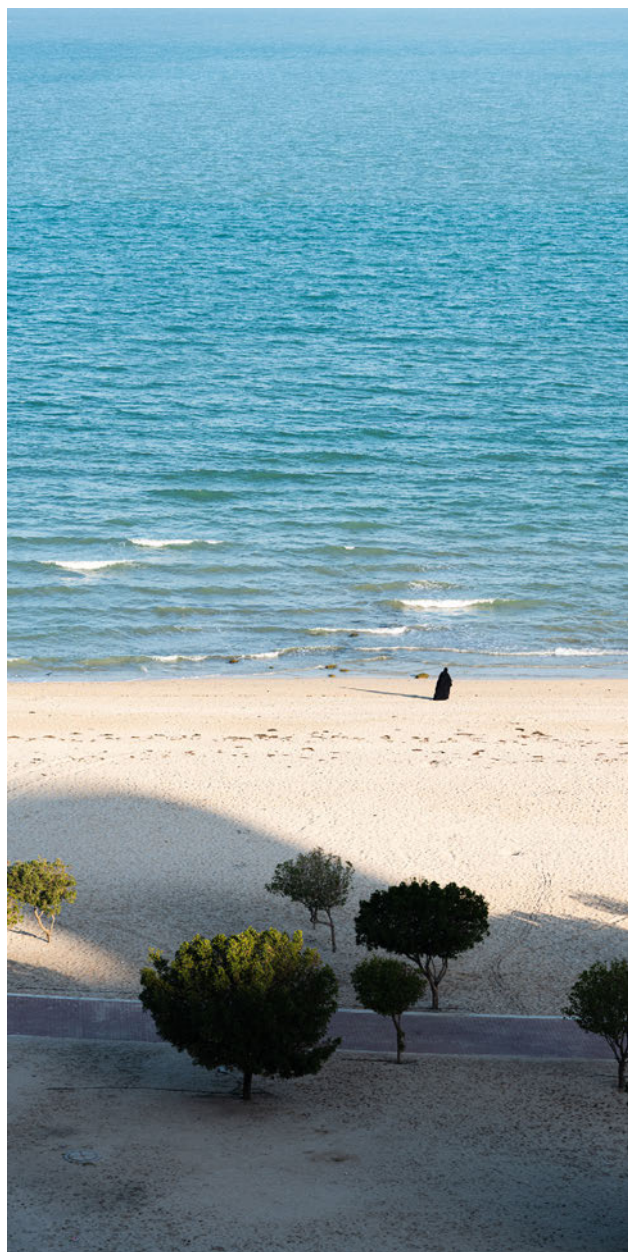
Fly back to the UK to see my family – it's been hard living alone in an apartment in another country while this whole pandemic rushes around the world.

### **Favourite lockdown challenge?**

I have been trying to do some more exercise (this is a major challenge for me!). I don't do much normally as I work long, unsociable hours. I know a trainer on Instagram called Pedro (@coach\_otene) who has been doing live video workouts, which I'm finding good fun.

### **Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

I've been trying to stay calm so I've been listening to a lot of London Grammar. I love the songs 'What a Day' and 'Hell to the Liars'.

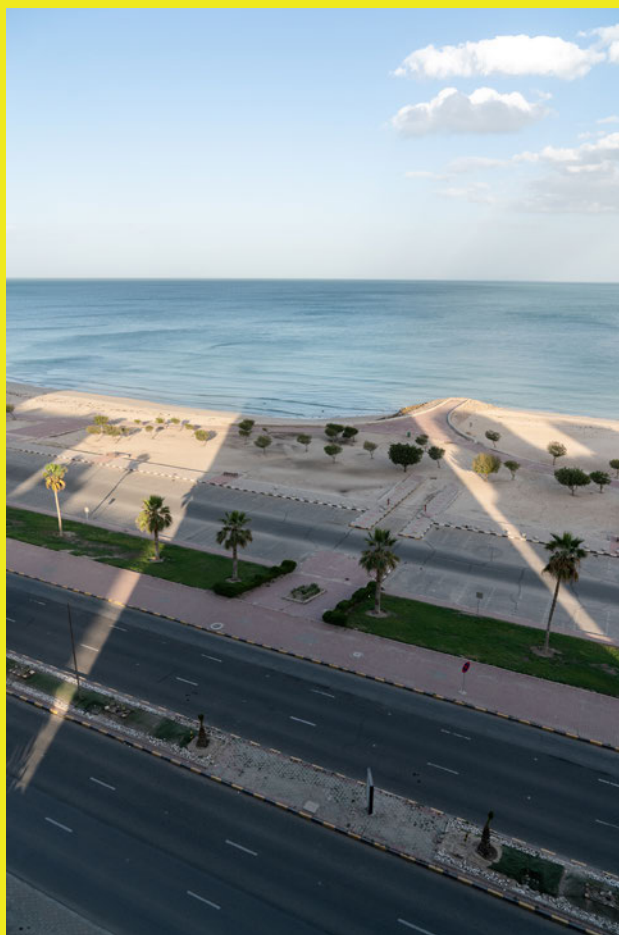


— A woman stands alone overlooking the Persian Gulf.





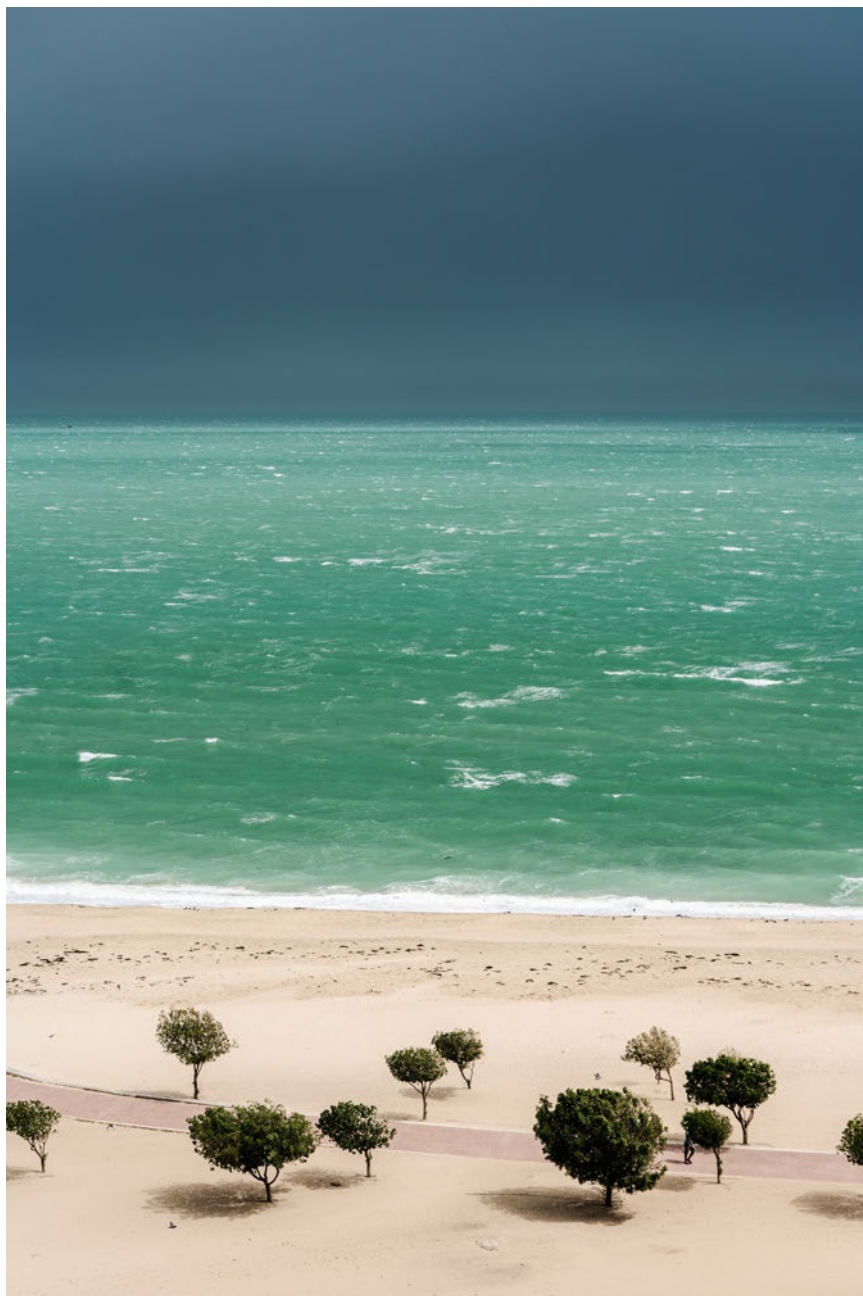
— It's been beautifully peaceful to watch the world go by, listen to the sea and watch the weather change.



— 5pm. The roads and beaches are clear of people as the evening curfew starts.



— A woman isolates herself sitting on a bench surrounded by pigeons.



— A stormy day on the beach. Not a person in sight.



— Late-night jenga.

# Waiting to reconnect

**Anna Weal**  
Digital Marketer  
Vancouver, Canada

## **How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

I've been working from home for over a month now, queuing for supermarkets with some shortages (pasta, toilet roll, baked beans – the usual items!). All nonessential businesses are closed and most restaurants converted to takeaway. All provincial parks are shut because all of us city dwellers had the same idea to escape each other by going to the hiking trails around Vancouver. Between the bars and hiking trails being shut all my recreational activities are nonexistent. Vancouver is not officially on

lockdown, but I am living according to lockdown rules. A (selfish) silver lining is that I've had more contact with friends and family overseas in recent weeks than in the last nine months I've been here.

## **What's been keeping you busy?**

I bought a load of board games when social distancing measures were first introduced and shops were closing. Living in a share house is beneficial in a time like this because I have three other housemates, plus my boyfriend, to hang out and watch Netflix with.



**The place you miss the most?**

Aside from the usual, I miss going to my favourite bar (who doesn't?), my surprising 'miss the most' is my walk to work every day. It's only 30 minutes each way, but it's great to get fresh air first thing and have a proper separation between the office and home. I can currently see my bedroom from my work-space so it is hard to completely shut down after work, or motivate myself in the morning.

**Who do you miss the most?**

I miss my friends in Vancouver. As someone who has been here less than a year I was finally feeling settled and like I had cemented friendships. I'm worried this two to three-month hiatus of in-person socialising will put me back a step in those friendships.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

I require a lot more social contact than I thought. I've always considered myself an introvert who needs as much time alone as I do with people. It turns out I get a lot more from other people's energy than I realised. I've also learned that I don't enjoy sharing a work-space with my boyfriend, which I probably could have guessed.



— A failed baking attempt.

— I can currently see my bedroom from my workspace, so it is hard to completely shut down after work, or motivate myself in the morning.



— A stress-free run adhering to social distancing.

**First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

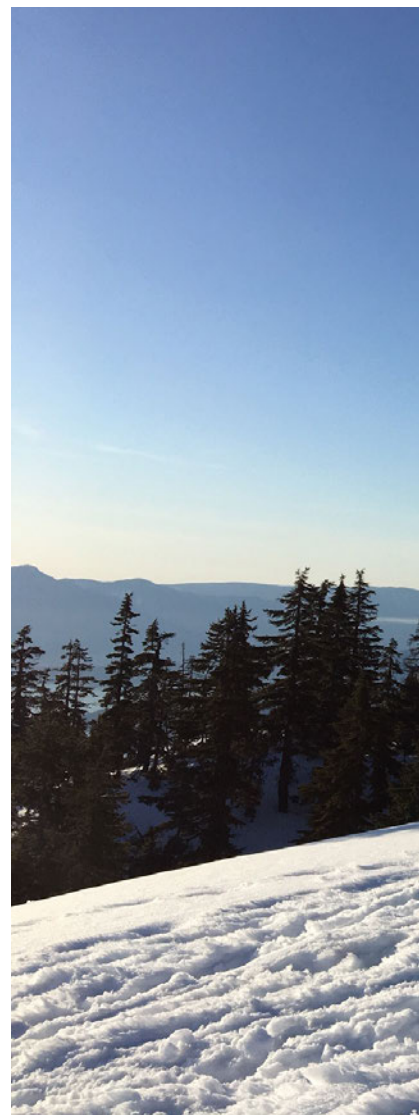
Get my friends together for a super flashy meal and cocktails, wearing an ungodly amount of makeup in the fanciest outfit I can find.

**Favourite lockdown challenge?**

My boyfriend has started baking banana bread, which seems to be a lockdown challenge judging by my Instagram feed.

**Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

'Caravan of Love' by The Housemartins.







— The last time I hung out with someone I didn't live with.

— I've always  
considered myself an  
introvert... It turns out  
I get a lot more from  
other people's energy  
than I realised.

# Finding calm in the middle of panic

**Fabio Negro and Renata Silvestrini**

Business Coach and Teacher

Montebelluna, Italy

**How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

**Fabio:** I have been living a complete overlap between my professional and personal life because I have been doing everything in the same flat from the 9th of March.

**Renata:** Not a lot, I was already at home on maternity leave with our baby Diego, now 8-months-old.

**What's been keeping you busy?**

**Fabio & Renata:** Diego! He started crawling around at the beginning of lockdown and now he's become really fast after one month.

**The place you miss the most?**

**F:** Monte Grappa, where I hike, and the Montello hill, where I cycle.

**R:** Any place I was free to go to before lockdown!

**Who do you miss the most?**

**F:** Honestly? Nobody. Video calling is sufficient for me.

**R:** My mother. I call her every evening now.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

**F:** Number 1: I feel perfectly at ease with limited social contacts



— Autoscatto (self-timer).



— The view from the window, looking south.





— The view from the window, looking west.

(I say this having experienced my 40th birthday in lockdown.).  
Number 2: working from home one day a week is enough.

**R:** I'm able to deal with panic. I really surprised myself: when my neighbours frantically locked themselves in at the beginning of lockdown, I remained calm. Studying chemistry has helped me to understand the situation better.

### **First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

**F:** A four-hour walk with a white spritz at the end.

**R:** I want to go to the sea, the mountains, the rivers and the lakes.

### **Favourite lockdown challenge?**

**F:** We are allowed to walk only 200 metres from our place, so I designed a track within that limit and last Sunday I walked 12km like a hamster.

**R:** Delaying the moment I had to start wearing a mask (before the obligation).

### **Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

**F:** Roots reggae, to help me concentrate while working.

**R:** Music for toddlers: 'Mamme in Sol'.



— A stroll with baby Diego in the garden.



— Home-office setup.

**— I feel perfectly at ease with limited social contacts. (I say this having experienced my 40th birthday in lockdown.).**

# The simple things

**James and Joyce Merchant**

Retired

New Winthorpes, Antigua

**How has your day-to-day life been affected by COVID-19?**

**James & James:** Our day-to-day life has been affected drastically. We're on 24-hour lockdown. The government gives us a few hours to get food and medication and after that you can't go out. We also have to keep to a six-foot social distance and wear masks.

**What's been keeping you busy?**

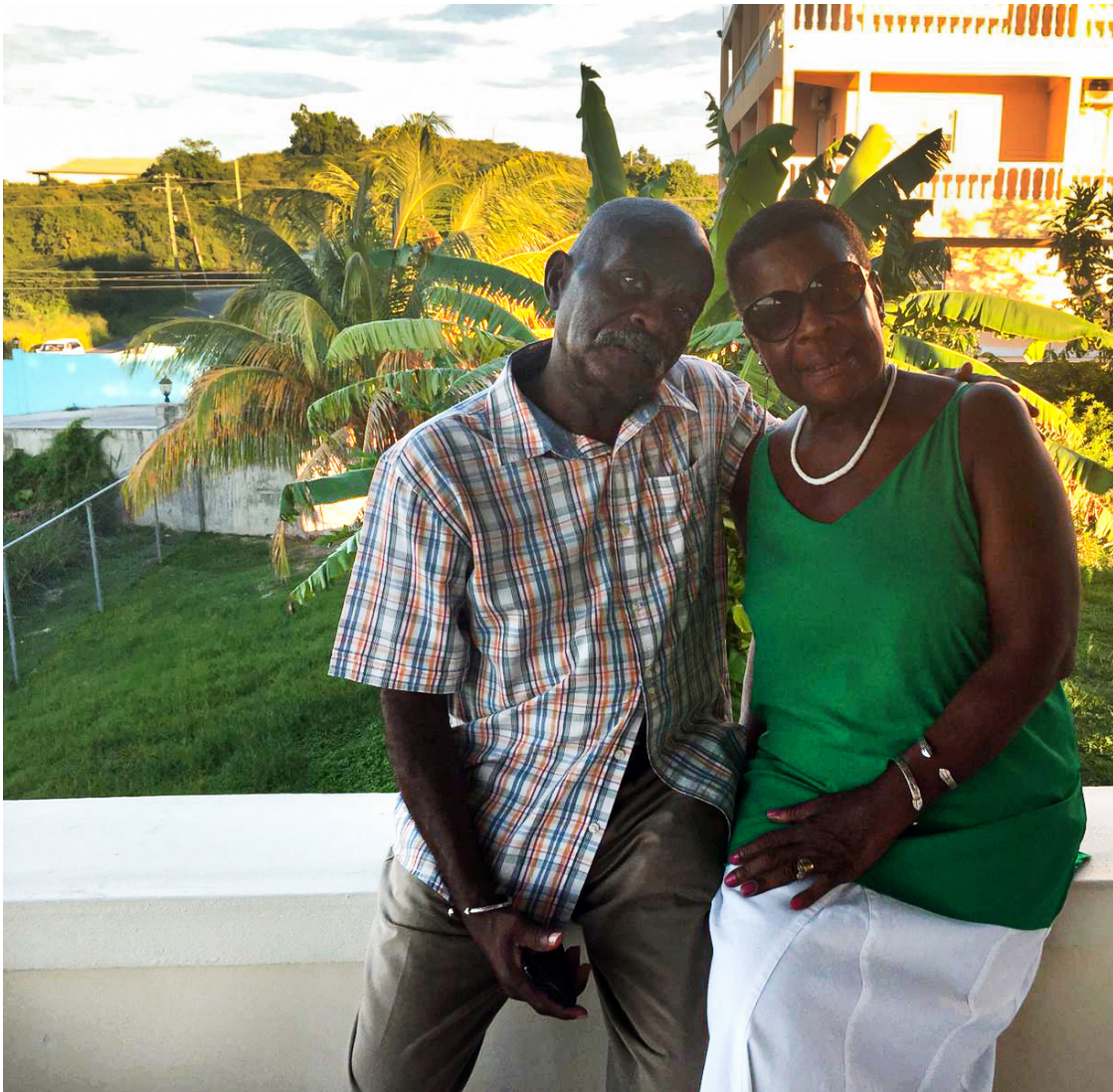
**Joyce:** Every morning after we get up we do exercises outside as we're lucky to have a long garden. I then trim our lovely flowers. We spend a great deal of time looking after our self-sufficient garden as a lot of what we eat is grown there. By the time we finish working on it we are knackered. But we enjoy it and never get bored of spending our day like this.





— We're enjoying the simple things again like picking a coconut from our tree and sipping on a fresh cold juice in the afternoon.

— [After lockdown]  
We'll jump in our jeep,  
drive around Antigua  
and stop at our favourite  
places for ice cream  
and snacks!



— Another day in lockdown, but we are thankful to spend it together. We never stop laughing.



**The place you miss the most?**

**Joyce:** Where we go for long walks. We cover a few miles that last between 45 to 50 minutes. I also miss going to the supermarket without there being a queue to get what you want for two hours.

**Who do you miss the most?**

**J & J:** The most important people in our lives: our children and our beautiful grandchildren. We miss them so much at times like this when they're not close to us. We always think about them and pray to God to keep them safe.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

**James:** That we should keep living life to the fullest and never take anything for granted because things can change in a matter of minutes. Also to appreciate each other more, respect each other and to just do the best we can each day.

**First thing you'll do once out of lockdown?**

**J & J:** Rush to the beach. We miss it so much. We'll go every day for a whole week. Then we'll jump in our jeep, drive around Antigua and stop at our favourite places for ice cream and snacks!

**Soundtrack to your lockdown?**

**Joyce:** 'Three Little Birds' by Bob Marley.



— We miss going out to our favourite places but know home is the safest place to be right now.





— Our delicious bananas in full bloom.

**— We should keep  
living life to the fullest  
and never take anything  
for granted because  
things can change in  
a matter of minutes.**

**Thank you to our  
contributors who took  
the time to share their  
stories from quarantine.**

**And to our friends  
for connecting us.**

**#quarantzine**

**Lunes**

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