

The Avoidance Dilemma

I have a very consistent, yet uneventful daily quarantine routine. I wake up, I eat breakfast on weekdays, I watch a show, I go to classes, I do some homework(sometimes), and then I just play video games, talk to friends, or sleep and slack off. This routine is hard for me in itself because I usually don't feel like even moving, and then on top of that, none of it even involves going outside. So when I got a message from some friends asking me if I wanted to hang out with them and go out, I knew I should go because I needed fresh air and to see people, and I wanted to. But for some reason I just couldn't bring myself to actually take initiative to reply back, and say yes to going with them. I ended up just staying home and doing what I usually do, which is not healthy and I knew that. But this route had been easier for me to take because for me personally, being alone is not the same as being lonely, and I just wanted to stay inside. So basically the being alone part of being inside wouldn't affect me too much and I knew that. I manipulated that thinking to try and make excuses for the fact that I was being a scared bed potato. For the rest of that day I felt super conflicted. I was asking myself, Should I have gone? Would they have been mad? Did I make too quick of a decision? I don't know if I would have more or less fun going out with them or not because I didn't give it a chance. But then again, being alone was nice in many ways (even though I am alone most of the time because I'm an only child). I thought about this a lot for the next week and came up with one main conclusion. I thought that maybe I was just avoiding having more options that could lead to bad outcomes. I didn't want to give myself the chance to have a bad time, but by doing that I didn't give myself the chance to have a good experience as well. I was so scared of the small percentage of having a bad time, that I didn't see that there was more of a chance that I would have a good or great time. I have had other times with trying to overcome this struggle of avoidance, but because of that I have learned (slowly) that by avoiding things, it will make the situation take much more time to overcome and it will take more time to own up and face what I did wrong and what the reality is, which in a lot of cases (in my experience) is the first step to getting better at overcoming anxiousness and avoidance. And thinking back on it now, I'm realizing that in the long run, overcoming this challenge will lead to me having more good and bad experiences that I can learn from and become a (hopefully) better person from. I know that this might take a long time, but for the sake of future me, it is worth it.

Artist's Statement

While reading *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah, I was inspired by the way he had turned an interesting but seemingly unimportant story into something super meaningful. He could do this with what seemed like any type of story, no matter how funny or how stupid it sounded, which I think is a real talent that I take a lot of inspiration from. I decided to write about a personal struggle I had that could also apply to a lot of other people based off of how Trevor does about his personal struggles. For example when he says "I floated. I was a chameleon, still, a cultural chameleon. I learned how to blend" (Noah 79). Here he is referring to how he was struggling with something some people might relate to, but he didn't know of anyone who did, and this also shows what his solution to coping with his feeling of difference was. I took this into as much consideration as I could, so I tried to come up with a way to show how I attempted to come up with a solution although I haven't really come up with a solid one yet. Another thing I tried to take into account when writing was writing impactful sentences or phrases in my memoir. Like when Trevor talks about his mom saying "I was a product of her search for belonging, she never felt like she belonged anywhere" (Noah 48). I thought this quote was a really good one liner that impacted me because I think that trying to find a place to belong to or feel like you belong to is universal, but also a personal struggle for everyone because the place will be different for everyone. I initially wanted to incorporate his humor into my story, but I had decided not to because I wouldn't know where to incorporate it in, but I aspire to be able to explain real, and deep stories like him in a way where it's actually intriguing and less lecture-esque. But mainly I just wanted to incorporate my interpretation of how deep he dove into a single story that he was passionate about, but for a different topic closer to me. I realized that this was a lot harder than I had thought, but I think I have done a pretty good job at getting what I had wanted to say out pretty clearly.