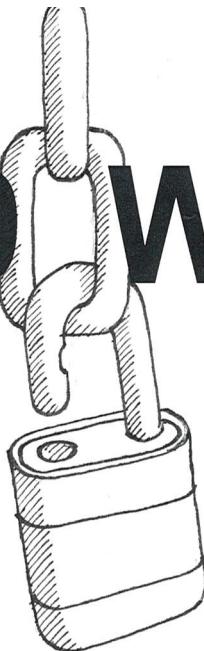


LOCKDOWN

*The
Experiences
of a
Generation of
Students
from -*





Anyone who is involved in education knows that it is a worthwhile and rewarding career. None will have witnessed before the unique impact the pandemic and consequent lockdown has had on the students they teach.

What you are about to read is the honest, often raw and sometimes humorous experiences of a generation of students at Prior Pursglove College during lockdown.

The submissions reflect the very real difficulties of the last year, together with the resilience, determination, maturity and inventiveness of the coping strategies our students have used in response to this unprecedented situation.

I have always considered young minds to be remarkable. The following pages prove this and more. They give us confidence in the knowledge that if young adults can not just overcome, but thrive during a worldwide crisis, then future generations will have the capacity to do the same, whatever threats are to come.

Sit back, read, enjoy, learn and be as proud as we are!

Chris Beadle. Y2 Tutor.

STRESSED, *DEPRESSED,*

but still going to get dressed!

One thing I learned from lockdown is how to enjoy the little things in life –

finding happiness in a nice coffee, or a walk outside, watching a film over Facetime with my friends.

We should enjoy every day and realise there is always something to be excited about, even if it is as mundane as a hot shower - treat everything like it is the best thing you've ever experienced.

You don't always have to have great plans to enjoy life and the real happiness comes from finding pleasure in the little things.

It was weird living in lockdown.

Basic things like the time didn't matter anymore. I could go to sleep at 4am and wake up at 4pm and the days would just be the same,

over and over and over and over and over and over again.

*

I think this year has impacted me in a **positive** way as I had time to do things which I couldn't do before.

One thing that helped me cope with the lockdown was reading books and listening to music.

Lockdown has been both a blessing and a curse.

It has brought me more time than I could ask for to re-connect with people, re-connect with myself and reassess what I would like to do with my life.

That might sound inspirational, but I've mainly spent my days watching Netflix, going to Aldi, eating Greggs pizzas and what else....

oh yeah, doing college work of course, how could I forget!

Anyway, I'll be glad when things become more normal (fingers crossed) *but I feel like I'll forever be wearing a mask!*

I believe I was better off than most during this time of online study as I don't find it hard to work and concentrate in my room -

in fact, I prefer it.

I am an introvert so not being able to talk to people much has actually been a good thing.

*

I am proud that I have kept a good work/life balance during lockdown

because I know some people find it hard to work when they have their TV or consoles distracting them, or find it hard to stop working because you work in the same place where you relax.

My greatest challenge was learning from home because I didn't get the natural feedback I would do in class.

KAGs were especially hard due to how much background

NOISE!

there was at home and face to face learning will be an improvement.

*

One positive was that I didn't have to spend 45 minutes travelling  and  college and didn't have to get up so early.

Maintaining contact with friends and family has been difficult and I look forward to when we can meet again in person.

I feel that the first lockdown and start of online learning was very difficult for me. It was difficult because nobody knew what was going to happen.

Teachers didn't know. The Government didn't know.

It was just a big black hole for us students.

The one thing that massively affected me was not being in college. I know it's crazy to hear because when you're there you never want to be there, but now I just want to go back.

When we are doing work from home there are so many distractions like siblings distracting you and we can't do anything about it - *we must stay where we are. We can't go to our grandparents' house to work because that's not allowed.*

We're young and we're locked up in our houses doing nothing for months and when you got some work to do it's like –

'what's the point anymore?'

However, this was the start of our second year and students should be proud because there is only so much a teacher can teach over Teams and the rest is over to us to figure out and complete the work to a deadline.

Millions of people have died because of this virus.

The whole world was in fear because of this virus.

I thought the lockdown was fun at first, *but I was wrong*. I couldn't leave the house without a specific reason.

(All day I was trapped at home. I felt like I was in jail).

I hope that this ends soon.

*

My girlfriend got me through the sh**e of the last year.

Her support and motivation have been ***everything***.

Things aren't great in my head at the moment, but she has always been there.

I know that when I can go to the gym, I will feel

better and stronger

in my body and my mind.

A monologue on acceptable losses

In every war, in every disaster, we have heard these words. Whether it's world wars, nuclear disasters or pandemics.

But can a loss ever be acceptable?

Can any death or great sacrifice so casually explain away so many sacrifices and deaths? Every sacrifice every death should be unacceptable.

We hear the figures, we see the numbers, rising-falling and rising again. However, it's easy to dismiss these. Can anyone say they can comprehend the human story of even one agonizing slow painful death? *I know I can't.*

Behind each number is an individual. Behind every individual is a family of people forever living in agony.

Perhaps it is unconscionable to consider this depth of human suffering and sadness, the emotion is too overwhelming. As a thousand sorrows make a tragedy, a thousand injustices make a travesty.

When small pebbles fall, they oft upset large boulders.

The tragedies of life tend to come so small issues turn into one big one -

an underfunded NHS, an underfunded education system created havoc.

Day-by-Day life strolls on by, the little things happen in the corner of your eye, but who'd have thought we'd come to miss all aspects of life,

Bleak or bliss.

Walking down-town, going to Gregg's, the friend's that surround, no - instead we're sat at home,

(In isolation).

We're all alone and so is the nation with nowhere to go and nothing to do. You want it to be over,

But no one has a clue.

Christmas came but it didn't feel right. There was still a battle, there was still a fight.

With all the vaccinations that have been successful, we're near to the end,

And it's been stressful.

It's taken longer than we thought to get where we are and it goes without saying,

COVID has left its scar.

*'It is foolish to **fear the future** that you have yet to see and know'.*

*

*'Lockdown taught me that there's **nothing wrong** with asking for help'.*

*

'BORING. HARD TO DO WORK -

but it made me realise that I took a lot of important things for granted'.

*

*'Lockdown was **BORING**, but I learned that I stress way too much about unimportant things'.*

*

'This has left me with -

a shopping and TikTok addiction!!'

‘I don’t know why we’re laughing 😠’

‘I’m laughing ‘cause you’re laughing! 😊’

*

‘I am fitter and healthier and learned how to save money!

I have also learned that the sea is dangerous!’

*

‘Because of lockdown I have developed a sense of **self-reliance** and **self-discipline** and gained a much greater appreciation of the importance of ‘*the smaller things*’ in life.’

*

‘Started running. Walking more. Reading again. Discovered I can’t do without social interaction, family and **‘Vera’ on the telly!**’

What a year!

I can honestly say I was not emotionally or mentally prepared for lockdown. At first, life seemed more relaxed, but days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months making every day feel exactly the same. Nothing felt real and I was completely giving up on my mental health and my college work began to suffer.

One day I woke up and went for a walk to reflect on my life and what it had become. I remember looking out to sea and telling myself

'I can do this! I will get on top and I will succeed'

Since that day I have gone onwards and upwards with my college work and my mental health. I contacted teachers and apologised, and they supported me, helping to take my grades from D's to B's. I have come a long way and I know many of my peers have too and I am so proud of them!

The most important lesson I have learned is that life is what you make it!

This experience will stay with me for the rest of my life and I can't wait to see what university has in store for me!

This is My Lockdown Experience.

Lockdown has been a complicated and confusing experience for many, but for me it's been quite tough. At the start, I took on the huge responsibility of caring for my younger sister while my mum went out to work - at the time she was only 2. It is challenging as it is another pressure, but I loved having her and watching her grow.

The positive thing from lockdown is I got into a relationship. I met my boyfriend in July, and we started dating in August. He helped me through the challenges of lockdown and even now when I can't see him in person, he is my person to vent to every evening after college and work. Having these gaps apart from each other has made the prospect of a long-distance relationship much less scary and has prepared us for the challenges to come in September when we both move to our apprenticeships.

Another positive thing is my academic achievement. So far, I have had four out of five university offers and two apprenticeship offers which I am extremely proud about. It just shows that even in the hardest times to learn, these organisations believe in my capability. That makes me extremely proud.

Like everyone else though, sometimes I just get overwhelmed with the uncertainty of everything. Not knowing how my grades will be decided or when life will be normal again, if ever, is the worst part,

but I have learned to take each day as it comes.

My greatest challenge during lockdown was adapting to do my college work at home with all the extra distractions from the dogs and family.

Also, it was trying to do my work whilst fighting an undiagnosed ongoing fatigue issue.

However, one positive to come out of lockdown is that I became close to the people I met during the first few months of college and gained more time for hobbies like photography and spending time with my family. I kept in contact with my friends through social media and we still hung out over the internet and played games like Jackbox and Cards Against Humanity. I found humour in the situation through joking around with my friends and spending time scrolling through social media.

During my time in lockdown, I discovered a lot about myself. The main thing is that I made a huge change in life goals late on into my time at college. I decided I no longer wanted to be a vet as I didn't want to do another 5-6 years at school to do a very academic based job - I just wanted to work with animals.

So, instead of going straight into university as I had always planned, I am taking a year off and then going onto a course that will aid me in becoming a

zookeeper!

I think everyone can agree that this year has been really hard for all of us.

The little things have made it better like

going on walks, taking my dog out more, learning something new and getting to know yourself a bit more.

I think what has kept me going through all of this are my friends at college.

I think keeping in touch has been very important over the last few months because we have been so isolated at home, so it has been really good to organise online things with friends, so we had the opportunity to stay connected - I think this has benefitted a lot of people.

I think another thing has been keeping myself busy by doing some baking or art

(Jonathan would love me for saying that)

and it's been nice seeing what everyone has been doing while being at home.

Covid has affected me in many ways and not being able to see people has definitely put a strain on me.

At the start of lockdown, I didn't really connect with people and was *lonely*.

However, as we hit June and July it lifted enough so that I was able to meet up with people. *Each night I met up with my two best friends to watch the sunset.*

My new boyfriend has become my light and my comfort when things got bad at home. My mental health is not great and my tablet dose has doubled combined with other complications as my physical condition declined.

We have no internet connection at home so my 'phone bill is shooting up, but I have to make it work to keep in contact with people.

Without my close friends I wouldn't have been able to cope.

*

Things lockdown has taught me:

love myself more, stay single, never take anything for granted, ***life is so short.***

Things I'm now thankful for...

my family, the fact their jobs remained safe, the way they helped people as key workers, vulnerable family members stayed safe,

the realisation that I couldn't do without them.

*

I would not have been able to cope without my friends and boyfriend.

I'm single now and sadder and wish we could go back to the first lockdown when I was happy with my boyfriend and life was so good.

He's still in my life and my best friend so I've got to stay positive.

*

I've found it difficult to be around my family so much.

Dad's work closed so it was unusual having him around 24/7 when I normally don't see him much. I seem to have 'un-learned' a lot of social skills and find that I'm not as connected to people as I used to be. However,

I have become much more interested in politics!

My mother gave me this inspirational quotation:

'Lockdown is an opportunity, not a disadvantage'

This made me use lockdown to learn new things. I thought about my future plans and changed them all!

Some people have seen lockdown as a lonely time and came out of it emotionally lower. My mother showed me how to use this opportunity and I have come out of it emotionally much stronger.

*

I did college work, took the dogs for walks, chilled at home, re-watched all the Star Wars films, grew a beard and....

CUT ALL MY BROTHER'S HAIR OFF!

*

I was able to spend a lot more time with my family at home

but haven't seen my sister for months(?)

Lockdown was a very difficult time for me and it restricted my desire to come out of my shell and enjoy life.

The news – on the TV, on-line, everywhere - was bad.

Video games helped me get through it.

There is no time to be stressed about your life when you're stressed about a virtual fish!

*

Revised three hours a day. Maths, U to B.
Psychology, D to B.....

lost three stone!

*

Did manual work – building, digging, gardening –
all to music!

*

Couldn't do without my friends, my dog, ***Netflix.***

*

I got back into reading and snuggles with my cat, ***Bella.***

My Greatest Challenge

was working from home. Although it doesn't sound hard, working from home is very difficult as all work is done online and having the motivation to do work outside of lessons was difficult.

There were some minor positives. Firstly, working from home meant that I felt a lot safer while working as I wasn't in close contact with anyone which would've been the case if I was required to work in college. Also, it is slightly less stressful as you didn't need to worry about things like travel and your surroundings when going to and leaving college.

Due to Email, I was able to gain any help I needed with work from my teachers, and it was easier to be given work as teachers were able to send me the documents I needed.

During these hard times, I have gained great independence as I have got a lot more work done and seemed to understand the topics I've explored, due to research and self-study.

*

'Just getting on with it'

My greatest challenge was to persist in my studies when my potential predicted grade was on the line,

under the pressure of time.

Despite not being at College, I found tranquillity with being entirely able to control my day.

I contacted my father almost every day through Zoom since he lives elsewhere, we could only talk through a 'phone call previously.

I discovered that, despite how much conviction you held about your beliefs and aspirations, they can still be altered and modified into different *aspirations for the future.*

*

Lockdown gave me more time to educate myself and raise awareness of social problems.

It made me appreciate my dogs more.

It made me realise I need a classroom and a teacher/student environment to learn effectively.

*

I found myself rediscovering things I loved to do *such as my ability to draw.*

I got through lockdown by –

facetiming my girlfriend and mates, watching great films, playing on-line and listening to music.

I've never been too motivated about work and lockdown made this worse as I was at home with all these **distractions**.

*

Nothing about lockdown has been pleasant

I wasn't in a good place to begin with but just stayed in my room and slept through it.

*

In lockdown I have become better at DIY!

My household just did not stop buying flat-packs and every week I had something else to construct.

This is the first time since the start of lockdown that I have written in a long line and so everything is

all over the place.

Spelling has also gone downhill because when you use Microsoft Word you cannot spell wrong – *well not at the time!*

The thing that pulled me though was my friends.
They were able to help me though dark times.

*

Lockdown has made me ***d e t a c h e d***
but I have found peace through cooking, walking
and bike riding.

*

Lockdown has been difficult, but at the same time, amazing!

I've been able to spend so much time with my family. It has shown me how much I took 'normal life' for granted. It's made me realise that I need to prioritise my family and friends and not just go through the motions of life.

I am grateful for all these experiences.

*

For all the negatives around the topic of lockdown, to my surprise, I didn't mind it!

On-line lessons were a pain, but I seemed to get a lot more work done.

The one negative is that I've become a huge couch potato and have become the laziest person alive!

2020, what a year!

It started off amazingly as I went to Rome - one of my dream places to visit. But then Coronavirus put us in a lockdown. Everyone had questions and we all wanted answers. We all started to focus on the germs everywhere and the spreading which caused everyone to panic.

My mental health was not the best and this lockdown sent me into a bad place. I could not see my family who keep me going, I could not see the friends I love, and I could not go to college. Work got harder and I started to see no point in it.

Then we began to get used to this new normal. We started to do online college, and all got annoyed at the *internet and Teams*. We were learning and trying to adapt to this new way of life.

Life is starting to get back to normal.

Jobs are starting again. Shops are reopening. We could go out for dinner. We can see family. But we still question things. *Will we sit exams? Will we go back to normal? What is normal now?*

We live in uncertainty and we will for a long time.

What a year, 2020!

PANDEMIC!

*What
pandemic?*

I never leave my room!

Special Thanks!

We would like to thank staff and students for their contributions to this book.

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