



a wild ride

ABOVE //
Heather Vance Devers
in her home with her
daughter, Betty, and
son, Jude.

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IN THIS CRAZY WORLD of COVID parenting, it seems like we're on a roller coaster with twists and turns that just keep coming. I can safely say that when we all pondered what 2020 would bring, this was not what any of us envisioned. I saw a meme the other day that said, "We all stayed up until midnight and cheered with champagne for this?!" It gave me a much-needed laugh. It's been a tough year; there is no denying it.

When the pandemic hit in March, we naively thought we would hunker down for a few weeks and COVID would pass. Now, in September, it's hard to even predict when things may go back to normal. Part of me believes that this *is* the new normal—maybe not virtual schooling or travel restrictions, but I think our eyes have opened to how careless we were about viruses previously. Sure, we washed our hands and stayed home when we were sick. But if you were to wear a mask to the grocery store before this, people would probably give you a side-eye and assume you were a germaphobe. We took our temperature only if we suspected a fever, and social distancing was something for introverts. Isn't it wild how quickly the norm changes? With the unpredictable ride we've had this year, who knows what 2021 will bring?

I keep thinking about the advice I would go back and give "early quarantine me." While I would definitely tell her to stock up on bleach wipes and toilet paper in February, I would also tell her that's it's going to be OK. Yes, you can virtual school your daughter, work and take care of your 2-year-old. Yes, you will survive being physically separated from your friends and family. Video calls will become your lifeline, giving you a way to share laughs and glasses of wine with loved ones. You will get used to wearing a mask, and with practice, so will your kids. Yes, you will know people who get the virus. Some will get very sick and others will get not much more than a cough.

I think the most important advice that I would give "early quarantine me" is to find time to breathe. There will be people, tasks and responsibilities coming at you from all angles, but if you don't find time to breathe, you won't be able to help anyone or anything. Especially yourself.

Be well,

Heather Vance Devers