

Basically:

***"I don't know how
to explain to you
why you should
care about other
people."***

But I'm trying anyway.

**YOU
SHOULD
STILL
WEAR
A
MASK**

You should still be wearing a mask. Covid isn't over. It's no fun to be sick, we still have no idea about the lasting health impacts of even a mild case, and Long Covid really isn't anything you want to fuck with. Wearing a mask is a really simple thing to do. There's no reason to stop.

I'm not going to pull out a bunch of facts here about Covid infection numbers because my argument doesn't depend on how dangerous it is right now as you're reading this. The numbers will go up and down, but there's always going to be some risk, so you might as well wear a mask. This is a moral argument. Wearing a mask is really simple and easy to do. If you care about other people you can wear a mask. All the reasons you have for not doing so are bullshit.

I'm not going to seek out and share stories about people with Long Covid, or people who have lost loved ones, or otherwise had their lives changed by this disease. I'm sure you saw these stories earlier on the pandemic. You know that bad things happen because of this disease. You just decided to stop doing the very simple thing you can do to make bad things happen less.

I'm just going to tell you a bit about my life, and the people I love, and some of the conversations we're

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for more actual facts / for current information / for resources in the twin cities check out Covid Aware Twin Cities

linktr.ee/covidawaretc

they're providing masks to the community, and trying to create a lasting culture of care.

the line "I don't know how to explain to you why you should care about other people" originates with the author Lauren Morrill. I didn't know this, it had entered my lexicon without context, but I looked it up to make sure I was getting the verbiage correct, and discovered 1) that this line has often been misattributed to Anthony Fauci, which is very funny/sad/pathetically american, and 2) the real source. apparently Morrill is quite frustrated by the lack of credit, which is understandable.

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deserves to live their life as much as anyone else is now dead or permanently disabled.

I don't know what else to say, because it feels ridiculous that I have to make this argument at all. I have no idea how effective my argument is, because it seems so obvious to me. Wearing a mask is a small thing you can do that could make a very big difference. Please, just trust me. Just do this. We can take care of each other.

The world is pretty terrible. Politics... Climate change... I haven't even gotten into how you should wear a mask because it protects you from wildfire smoke, but it does! Another reason to listen to me! The world is full of these huge terrible things, and as just one person it is a struggle to feel like anything you're doing makes any difference. But you can wear a mask! It is a very small thing, and it makes a real difference, and any excuse you have for not wearing one is probably bullshit. So wear a mask! Please!

having. I hope these stories support the incredibly simple argument I'm making, which is that you should wear a mask, because wearing a mask is easy and it stops bad things from happening.

(I'm not going to make a case for why masking is effective. I'm not interested in arguing with people in a fascist death cult.)

The target audience is basically: my parents, and my partner's parents, and the other loved ones of their generation who have mostly stopped masking. I hope that this zine is useful to other people, but if the only thing it does is make my father listen to me: mission accomplished.

I'm going to start with a story about my father. He's seventy years old, and very sweet, and very silly, and does not like people micromanaging his life. He told me that wearing a mask is annoying. Dad, I think you're annoying!

My parents flew to Alaska recently. They wore masks to the airport, but then nobody else was wearing a mask, so they decided not to bother. It's so disappointing that my weirdo hippie parents were concerned with what everyone else was doing. I told

my dad that I never imagined he'd be such a conformist and he didn't know what to say.

It's really sad. We've gotten to the point where we're emotionally blackmailing our parents into masking better — or at least trying to. My partner and I both mask when we're out in the world, and so does our very small social circle. Our most likely vectors for transmission are our boomer parents who have given up on masking. I've told my mother that if she isn't masking regularly we won't be able to hang out as much, we won't be able to share meals, because I wouldn't feel comfortable unmasked around her. I know 2020 was really rough on my mother because she missed me — I'm an only child, we're close, I missed her too. I hate playing on her emotions like that, but if she isn't going to listen to common sense, I guess I have to.

My partner's mom said that their church isn't requiring masks so she's going to keep being maskless in public until that changes. My family's church isn't requiring masks either, and I am so fucking disappointed in it. You say you care about people? You want to build caring community and work courageously for peace with justice and mercy? Well, you can start by wearing a mask. It's the simplest

been an otherwise healthy workplace maybe the customers not masking would have felt less malicious, but I'm not sure.

Wear a mask so that maybe depressed retail employees won't assume you're evil! That's a pretty shit reason to do something, but like, if you aren't going to do it to protect the health of yourself and your community maybe you need a shitty reason?

I wrote the majority of the text of this zine on my phone between two and three in the morning. It put me into a really foul mood, and made it very hard to fall asleep. This is such a boring argument to make. It's so simple. To quote Lauren Morrill: "I don't know how to explain to you why you should care about other people."

I am not going to copy/paste the complete lyrics of the song "People" by AJJ, but it's very tempting. People are what matter! Let's keep each other alive!

Let's say I'm wrong, and you're doing this for nothing. Oh no, you've been mildly inconvenienced.

Let's say I'm right. You didn't wear a mask, and now you / someone you love / a complete stranger who



healthy. You can do it to show you appreciate the people who work there who probably aren't making a living wage.

From June 2021 to January 2023 I worked at an upscale dry cleaner. It was basically a retail job, but more annoying, with a clientele mostly made up of terrible rich people. There were lots of regulars, people who came in every week, whose names I knew. I masked the whole time I worked there. For the most part the customers and my co-workers masked only when it was required by the city of Saint Louis Park, and even then, not always. It got to a point where every time a customer came in without wearing a mask I thought to myself, "They don't care if I die. They want to kill me."

Which...

I'm sure if you asked them they would have said they didn't want to murder the helpful dry cleaning girl, but also, they didn't bother doing the simplest thing to keep me (and themselves!!!!) alive, so like?

This job was very bad for my mental health for many reasons. The masking was just a symptom of how neither the company nor the customers were interested in treating me like a human being. If it had

thing. Protect yourself, protect other people. Yes it's annoying, you can't sing and share food the way you want to. But you can stay alive! You can keep other people alive and healthy! It doesn't seem like much of a sacrifice when you think of it like that.

I don't see how these churches can in good conscience claim to care about people and not have regular masking as a social norm if not a requirement? I can't believe the only place I go with real masking is the anarchist bookstore? I mean, I can, that actually makes a lot of sense that a place built around the idea of mutual aid, around the idea that people should look after each other's interests is still masking semi-vigorously. But it's so disappointing that nowhere else is.

The church I grew up in did a lot to influence my worldview. By giving up on masking I really do think it's failing to live up to its ideals. The fact that I'm having to badger my parents about this really does feel like they've forgotten the principles they raised me with.

I've been trying to think of why my thinking on this is so different from my parents. I'm significantly more online than them, or like, queer online, not Facebook online. Before Covid started I was already surrounded

by people thinking about disability and mutual aid. I've read a lot about the aids crisis, I'm very aware of how the government was completely happy to let a segment of the population die, and how the significant efforts to keep people alive came from grassroots organizations. But none of that seems like a good explanation.

It feels really bad that I'm having to convince the people who raised me to have moral convictions that they should mildly inconvenience themselves for the good of the world.

It really is a mild inconvenience, wearing a mask. It's a lot better than being sick. And you don't need to be perfect, but just... try. It's better than nothing.

I'm writing in Minnesota where it's going to be winter soon enough. There are limited days of patio dining left. But like, do you really need to eat in a restaurant? There are other ways to spend time with the people you want to hang out with. I'm not asking anyone to be a hermit, just to be a bit more cautious. The perfect is the enemy of the good, and I would just be so thankful if the people in my life get *better* at masking even if they're still taking risks I wouldn't. I just want people to be thinking about their actions and how to minimize risk for themselves and the community

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around them instead of plowing on like the pandemic is over, which it most certainly is not.

I still do stuff! I've been to more rock'n'roll shows since the fall of 2021 than in the five years previous because being completely cut off from live music made me realize how much I love it. I wear a mask, which I sometimes take off to drink some water if I've been dancing a lot. The best shows I've been to in this era have been ones with the best masking practices. (We love you Jeff Rosenstock!) I've gone to the movies, and eaten popcorn from the Riverview with real butter, and then put my mask back on. Not perfect, but a compromise between doing everything you can to protect yourselves and others and living a life that brings you joy.

There are plenty of situations where wearing a mask is really fucking easy, including basically anytime you're shopping.

How annoying is it to wear a mask when you go to the grocery store? What's the worst part about it? Do your glasses get fogged up? Is it annoying that you have to take it off for a second if you want to smell the peaches to check if they're ripe? That's not very annoying. That's not a big inconvenience. You can wear a mask to help keep all of the other customers

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