



My Relationship with (*a guy named*) COVID

Barrie Sands

At first you were an idea, a potential that I have yet to meet. I heard many different stories about you, everyone seemed to know of you, but didn't really know you. You were so mysterious.

When you first came into my life, I was nervous, and intrigued by the thought of you. I wanted to know more about you, get to know you better. It was exciting, mysterious, and a little scary; I felt so vulnerable and so exposed. The essence of danger was seductive and attractive; the newness was so intoxicating.

Your presence in my life brought out both the worst and the best of me. I found myself, making sacrifices for you and our relationship. I began to explore my own beliefs and convictions, and at times it led me to places that were filled with trepidation and uncertainty. I found myself making excuses for you, but it was OK, I wanted to, and it felt like something I just had to do. You were so charismatic and compelling.

After a little while, as we got to know each other better, you became more familiar. The newness was wearing off. I began to understand how you were and what "made you tick." While looking at you I started to see a reflection of myself. Who was I? We became so close that I lost myself in you. You were my life! At moments, I felt consumed by you and felt like I couldn't breathe.

It was because of you that I created a mask to conceal myself. I noticed that the people around would look at me, with judgment, not recognizing who I had become, as I was hiding behind a mask that shrouded my true identity. Within the confines of our relationship, I felt safe behind the mask, it made sense. No one could see how I really felt, not even myself.

As time moved on, our days became monotonous, we fell into a routine, a day-to-day grind as it seemed; every day the same. Not much excitement, not much fun. We told the same stories over and over. What once intrigued me . . . now bored me. The things you did that I used to laugh at or be wondered by, were now old habits . . . that irritated me. I found myself trying to find time not to be with you, and make excuses to get away; and in those times I took off my mask and took a deep breath.

I found a freedom in that, that I have not felt before. I found that, not only could I breathe without you, but I was able to take a deeper, more meaningful breath; and yes, that scared me. Could I really breathe without you? Interesting question, because it was you who first took my breath away, and now, I find I want it back.

As more time went by, I realized that this relationship wasn't working any more.

I felt stifled and controlled by you. You were suffocating me. You were selfish, self-centered, and only thought of what was best for you. I felt used and betrayed; and I allowed it. I was blinded by the newness, the intrigue, the hype and the glamor, for everybody was talking about us; we were a global sensation. But like all relationships that are based upon a rocky foundation and false hopes, it got old and tiresome and wasn't sustainable. I have worn the mask for so long that when I looked in the mirror I didn't even recognize myself. The mask gave me a false sense of security, and was used to create a distraction from my innate power within.

Who did I become?

As I took the mask off that shielded my true identity, I uncovered a brave, courageous, creative, strong, capable, vibrant person who was just waiting to come out and be seen. My breath gave me a voice, a song, and the deeper I breathed, the better I felt. I found this new elixir of life. Within all my vulnerabilities, I found the strength, and courage, to leave my mask off and confront you.

I embraced the idea of life without you, and exhaled you away. The time has come to end our relationship; the time has come for you to leave. I realize that your presence no longer serves me, for I am a different person. I am no longer fearful and afraid of being alone, and I do not need you to define me. I am whole and unto myself, I am confident and magnificent, I love myself enough, and I know that you can no longer affect me and put me under your spell.

I look around me with new eyes and embrace the uncertainty and the unknown; the people look different . . . the world looks different.

I looked into the mirror, at all that I am, exposed and vulnerable, and there all along looking back was compassion, love, and understanding that was behind that mask the whole time.

She said I know who you are . . . Do you know who you are?

Yes, I answered! I say hello to a new me, and go forth into a new world, filled with endless possibilities and potentials for a future I have yet to step into.

Thank you COVID, Take Care

