

MY DIARY

embrace»

ISSUE #4 - SUMMER 2020

Dear Diary,

Today i thought about Cabin Fever (4-5) and being able to go to your homw is a basic need in times like this. I noticed the impact COVID-19 had on my life but was luckily able to start an amazing experience at my internship (6-7). Since I moved to rotterdam a lot has changed, for example I got a new roommate, Bee (8-11). She is this fluffy creator that explores everything around the house. Besides Having a new roommate, I also started making more friends (12-13) and i started to learn wahat I treasured about those friendships and how they have influenced me. The COVID- 19 has shown has made me give deeper relations with my roommates and we became really creative during the lockdown. Eventhought it wasn't alwyas fun times we organized our own home festival and lots of movie nights (14-15). The last few months have been so different from what I have been used to. The only thing I can truly say is that for the first time in my life, no one is telling me what to do (16-17). Besides this is the moment that we, I, can change so much since there is so much to change in this world (18-19)

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EmbrACE is the official magazine of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. It connects students and faculty staff with topics related to history, culture and the media industry. The editorial team of EmbrACE is part of International Faculty Association ACE.

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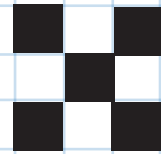
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Dear Diary,



I miss my family, and more importantly, I miss home. Both my home countries, Canada and Denmark, shut their borders before the Netherlands even started to place regulations, meaning that my chances of going home pretty much slipped away. Yes, on a technicality I could have entered, but either my insurances wouldn't be covered, or I would have to have 2 weeks quarantine or worse, I could risk my family's health. But I miss home. I miss the feeling of being back in your home country, visiting friends and family and just being back in the country that I feel truly a part of.

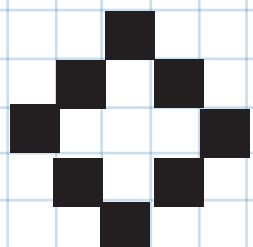
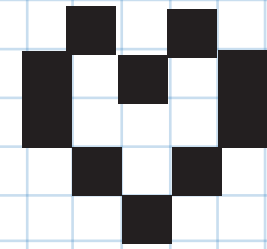
To remedy this I have been trying bring a little bit of my culture into my life here. Small flags adorn parts of room, traditional recipes fill my fridge and books or films that remind me of home fill my free time. If I could I would make it snow outside, or import some foods that I cannot get here but there is only so much I can do (or afford). Despite that, being able to do all of these other little things makes staying inside more comforting, cosy and secure, or in Danish, it makes my house more hyggelig. Bringing my culture to the Netherlands helps ease this homesickness that constantly hounds me. But that is a part of my problem isn't it? I'm seeing my nations as home when in fact they aren't my only homes. I have managed to build a home here in the Netherlands, and I have built connections. I call my house home, who wouldn't after a year right? I've settled into a rhythm and a life, meaning that when I leave, a part of me stays here.

Even when taking that into consideration I can't help but feel that a part of me is off-balance. Usually I would be travelling and seeing family every few months but having that option ripped away makes the world feel so much smaller. It's hard for my Dutch friends to un-

derstand this need to return home since most of their families are also in their home country, which is also the country that they live in. It's hard for them to understand the nervous feeling of not knowing when you will see your family again. That sounded really dramatic, I did not mean it that way. I meant it more in the way that I don't know the next time we will be celebrating a birthday, or holiday or anything together.

I'm probably just overreacting. Canada and Denmark shut their borders before EUR transitioned to full online education so unlike some of the international students I did not have the time to get home. Plus I do have family here so at the time it seemed reasonable to stay. AS an international and an expat I have to assume that a big part of this feeling can be described as mere cabin fever. But I have friends and family here and I can leave and I am not stuck in my home so I cannot help but wonder what it is that I am actually missing? Is it people? Is it a place? Is it a feeling? Probably little bit of all of them...

Anna Wlvel Bouchard



CABIN FEVER

Dear Diary,

These past weeks have truly been an emotional rollercoaster that has pushed me to frustration day and day again. But of course, that's not news to anyone, and the mess that is 2020 has left nobody unscathed. It's crazy to think that it has already been four months since the initial lockdown period and closure of the universities. Four months since we first heard the phrase "these unprecedented times" being thrown around left and right. The "uncertain climate" that had also pushed the majority of international students to buy tickets and leave the Netherlands for their home countries as quickly as possible. As I'm over 21 and don't have an American long-term residence visa anymore nor a passport, I was unable to see my family in the US due to the imposed travel ban. My flatmates also went home so I was stuck in The Hague by myself for a little over a month. I had the standard student corona experience: not leaving the house for days on end, eating pasta for every meal, binge watching Netflix shows in a day and barely studying for online exams. Some days, all I heard was the sound of my neighbor upstairs screaming along to Linkin Park lyrics for hours. This went on to the point that, sometimes, I would randomly get one of his songs stuck in my head and would find myself unconsciously humming the melody. I guess it was a type of entertainment, but not necessarily a pleasant one.

Then, fast forward a few weeks, I started my internship. I had applied for two positions at online magazines and was fortunately able to start one of them as planned. Suddenly, I was thrown into the world of fashion journalism, which left me overwhelmed, as I don't per se consider myself a fashion "connoisseur". But above all that, the weirdest part must have been to start working in an editorial team of people that I had never met in person. I was being taught everything from writing news to addressing the right reader audience over digital hangout sessions. Regardless of being thrown into the digital deep end, however, I must say that I was able to adapt quite quickly and that my colleagues really did their best to make my adjustment period as smooth as possible. Before I knew it, I was writing news on the daily and experienced the wonderful feeling of seeing my name show up above my articles on the internet. If someone were to google me now, information on me would actually show up, not just the life stories of various Austrian women who share my name. I don't know why, but that fact just excites me.

Aside from short news, I was also able to pitch my first background story, which I knew would require more effort and research. Choosing a topic came naturally to me: Resale platforms during Covid-19. In fashion, the topic that interests me the most is sustainability and resale by far, so I knew that I would love to integrate that somehow. I had read that platforms like Depop and ThredUp were doing surprisingly well during the coronavirus lockdown period, in comparison

to most fashion companies who were struggling to stay afloat as their sales plummeted. So, after contacting Depop, ThredUp and Vestiaire Collective, and getting quotes for my interview questions, the story came together.

Meanwhile, as I'm writing this journal entry, I am almost done with the internship. I have a little over a week to go, and am currently writing an article about the potential that TikTok has for the fashion industry. Once I finish it and watch it go up on the website, I will have my very last Monday morning editorial meeting via Google Hangouts, thank everyone for the wonderful experience and then take a long breather. Working nine to five is truly no joke, even if it is done entirely from home and you can roll out of bed at 8:45 and sit at your desk in your pajamas if you want to. While I don't have all my summer plans finalized yet, I have one very exciting thing to look forward to: finally moving into my new apartment in Rotterdam with my two closest friends from IBACS.

I guess, I would like to conclude this by saying that, while the lockdown period has provided me with so much frustration, a lot of good things have come out of it too. I of course recognize the privileged situation I was in and am grateful for the fact that I was able to safely isolate without repercussions. Above all though, I learned how to value my own company and be alone with my own thoughts, kick started my journey to becoming a good journalist (if that's still the career choice I'll be picking... who knows honestly?) and strengthened a lot of friendships along the way, for which we have to thank Facetime and cheap red wine from Albert Heijn. With everything that happe-

ned this year, from the coronavirus to the ongoing global systemic racism and police brutality against Black people, it may be tempting to write 2020 off completely and just pretend it never happened. But I'm not going to do that. I'm going to carry on with optimism and try to do my part in contributing to the changes that are definitely overdue in the society and world we live in. Although, at 11:59pm on December 31st 2020, you can be sure that I won't be shedding any tears either.

Anna Zwettler



Dear Diary,

Today was a big day not only for me but also for my new roommate. Her name is Bee and she happens to be a little kitten. My partner and I picked her up this morning from her previous home where she lived with her mom and brother who were also waiting to be adopted. Bee doesn't belong to any recognized cat breed, she is small, wild, and unfortunately afraid of people. Before adopting her we decided that our goal will be to: provide her with a loving home and family, ensure proper health and development, and finally help her cope with her fear of people.

From today onwards I will keep track of Bee's socialization process. This will allow me to arrive at some kitten conclusions and come up with kitten tips for beginners.

SOCIALIZING A KITTEN: 10 DAYS WITH BEE



21ST OF JUNE 2020

Day one (arrival):

It was a rough start. Bee didn't want to leave, she was very stressed in the car. When we arrived home she immediately hid under the couch and stayed there for a few hours. We managed to get her to play with a fishing rod toy which was a huge success and a first small step in building a bond with her.

Tip:

Before welcoming your kitten make sure to cover all the holes in your apartment. Your kitty will surely find and test out all of them. Our sofa turned out to be empty inside with a nice cat sized entrance from the backside. Bee came out of there all dusty.



22ND OF JUNE 2020

Day two:

Bee moved from under the couch to a blanket next to the couch. Yet another small success. She played with confidence, however she still ran away from our hands and didn't let us pet her. After dinner she joined us for a game of Risk.

Day three:

Today Bee decided to go on an apartment exploration. She slept on her new favorite pillow and even purred. Unfortunately, she also started scratching the couch.

23ND OF JUNE 2020

Tip:

If your kitten is afraid of your hands, try feeding them snacks from them. This will enable you to build a positive association in your kitten's mind and hopefully let the two of you bond a little.

24ND OF JUNE 2020

Day four:

Our apartment has a small balcony that Bee isn't allowed to go out on. Today she sneaked out and spent probably around an hour there watching the birds before we managed to find her. Later she decided to steal a skirt out of my closet and play with it.

Day five:

Today my friends and I spent the day in Scheveningen and Bee stayed home alone for the very first time. She was very happy to see us after we came back. Because no one has been playing with her for the whole day she had a lot of energy and we had to spend the night playing with her.

25 OF JUNE 2020

Tip:

When leaving the kitten alone for long periods of time remember to a) cat proof the house and b) provide entertainment. Cat proofing may include putting away all the food and dangerous objects, or pushing in all the chairs so the kitty doesn't jump on the table. With Bee, providing entertainment wasn't difficult as she was fascinated with a cardboard box.

26TH OF JUNE 2020

Day six:

Bee finally let us pet her. She was very sleepy and clearly needed some affection so we gave it a try and it was a success. She started purring and being very cute. She still was a little scared though. We suspect that she wasn't given much affection in her previous home.

Tip:

A young kitten requires a lot of sleep. Make sure not to disturb them (by for example petting or cuddling them) as this may cause stress and unwanted behaviours. It was really difficult for us not to pet Bee since she was so cute and fluffy while asleep.

27TH OF JUNE 2020

Day seven:

Today we made the first vet appointment for Bee. She will need to receive vaccines, pills, and we want her to have a passport. We also went shopping for a transporter, and ended up buying a lot more kitten things than necessary, including a laser. The kitty laser turned out to be the best investment of all.

Tip:

Getting the right toys is crucial. Kittens are easily distracted so if they are doing something they shouldn't be, it's easier to distract them than attempt to punish or educate them. When choosing toys consider some that the kitten is able to play with alone, some that develop a healthy hunting instinct, and some that stimulate the brain.



Day eight:

Since we made the vet appointment for the 29th of June I decided to trim Bee's nails before that. I was really worried that she would hate the vet and maybe even scratch them.

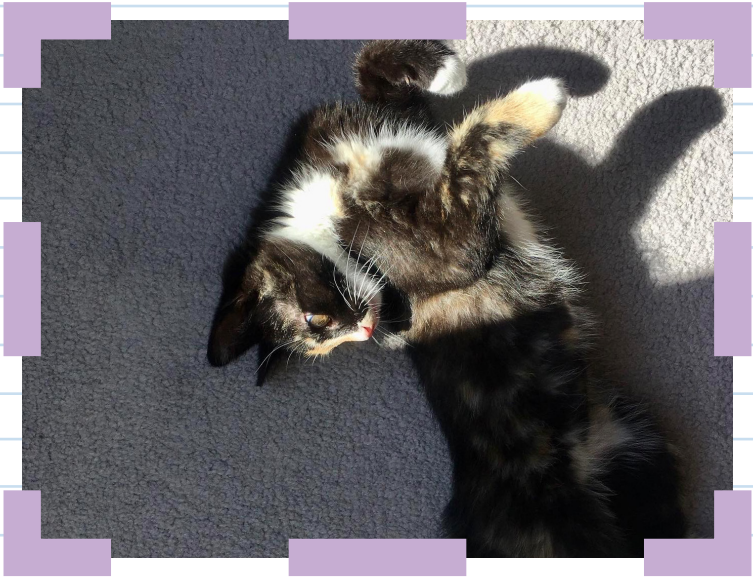
28TH OF JUNE 2020

Day nine:

Bee is a healthy kitten! I took her to the vet today and she was a little angel. She didn't cry, didn't scratch, and she was very brave. Success!!!

Day ten:

The last day of our small experiment with Bee. She is now a friendly little kitten, fully vaccinated, and happy at her new home. This morning she even woke me up to get some cuddles and belly rubs. Her fear of people and hands has gotten much better however, there is still a lot of socializing to be done.



30TH OF JUNE 2020

Lara Domaradzka

General feedback:

Such a fun and easy read! I think it fits the theme perfectly, because you have really taken on the 'diary style'. It's a light and personal article which I think will make a good contrast with some other articles in this issue.

Dear Diary,

I never had the patience to write in a diary every day. As a kid, I used to be very passionate for three days and then I would put it away and never look at it again. Then after a couple of months I would give it another chance and the vicious circle would begin again. So, for me there are no warm feelings when I think of a diary. However, I did love ‘vriendenboekjes’, the notebook you would share with your friends, they would take it home and answer little question about you and themselves. It started around third grade, when all the kids in class brought their pimped notebook along. I remember mine vividly, with pink fur and princesses on it. Only the true friends got the honor of writing in your ‘vriendenboekje’. So, if someone asked you to do so you’d know the friendship was the real thing. Especially if I’d liked the person a lot, I would go all out and pimp the pages with colors, drawings and stickers.

But let’s take it on a more diary level and get more personal. Maybe this little ‘vriendenboekje’ will help you realize who you are right now or who you want to be. It’s never harmful to translate your thoughts on to paper or do some self-reflection. What do you want to do later? Who do you consider your close friends and why? What do you value in a friendship? I’d like to invite you to answer these questions, take it with your friends afterwards, learn some stuff about yourselves and reminisce about the cute times of ‘vriendenboekjes’.

Laura Slee

FRIEND:

Favorite memory together.....

What do you value most in your friendship.....

Stay in together/ go out together

Is he or she a cat person/ dog person

Most common used phrase by your friend.....

What would your friend be best at workwise.....

What do you admire most in her or him.....

What do you tell your friend often which you should repeat once more

.....

THE OWNER:

What is your name.....

What course do you study.....

What do you want to be when you grow up (will always be relevant!!)

.....

How much faith do you have in the future (0-100):.....

Would you rather be extremely rich and hate your job / earn moderate and love your job / (a great alternative??)

How many times did you think about dropping out this year.....

Why did you or why not?.....

Are you proud of finishing your year: I don’t care/ hell yeah/ could’ve done better

Who’s the friend (or who are the friends) you’d share your worries and doubts with.....

.....

How did you and meet.....

Do you still remember when?.....

Favorite memory together.....

.....

What do you value most in your friendship.....

Stay in together/ go out together

Is he or she a cat person/ dog person

Most common used phrase by your friend.....

What would your friend be best at workwise.....

What do you admire most in her or him.....

What do you tell your friend often which you should repeat once more.....

.....

Dear Diary,

Crazy times we are living in right now, don't you think. This virus swooped into our lives making us having to change our so accustomed behaviour. All planned activities and events were thrown out. This could be a bit frustrating sometimes for a first year student. As a first year student you want to be able to go out and about. You still want to be able to see your friends, some of whom you have just met this year. At first, not having to go to campus made me feel like I had all the time in the world. However, what could you do with all this time besides going for a walk outside and getting back on the dusty old sports mat. But even this gets boring after a while. It even got to the point where I started missing coming to lectures, because in those moments I was able to see my friends and talk to them.

So what do you do when something like this happens. I have to say that I am lucky enough to be living in one house with 7 other students. I mean, sometimes we would get on each other's nerves, but we also created a lot of moments that I will never forget. It has taken some adjusting to the situation, which sometimes could be a bit of a downer. But this situation has made us become more creative with the means we had. We could not do much, but we managed to do a lot with the means we got.

For example, we organized a tremendous amount of movie nights, which even resulted in us buying a second-hand beamer taking our movie nights to the next level. Right now our guilty pleasure is watch *The Bachelorette* with all the girls in the house. Every Wednesday we lie together on the couch laughing about the new episode, drinking tea and discussing our day.

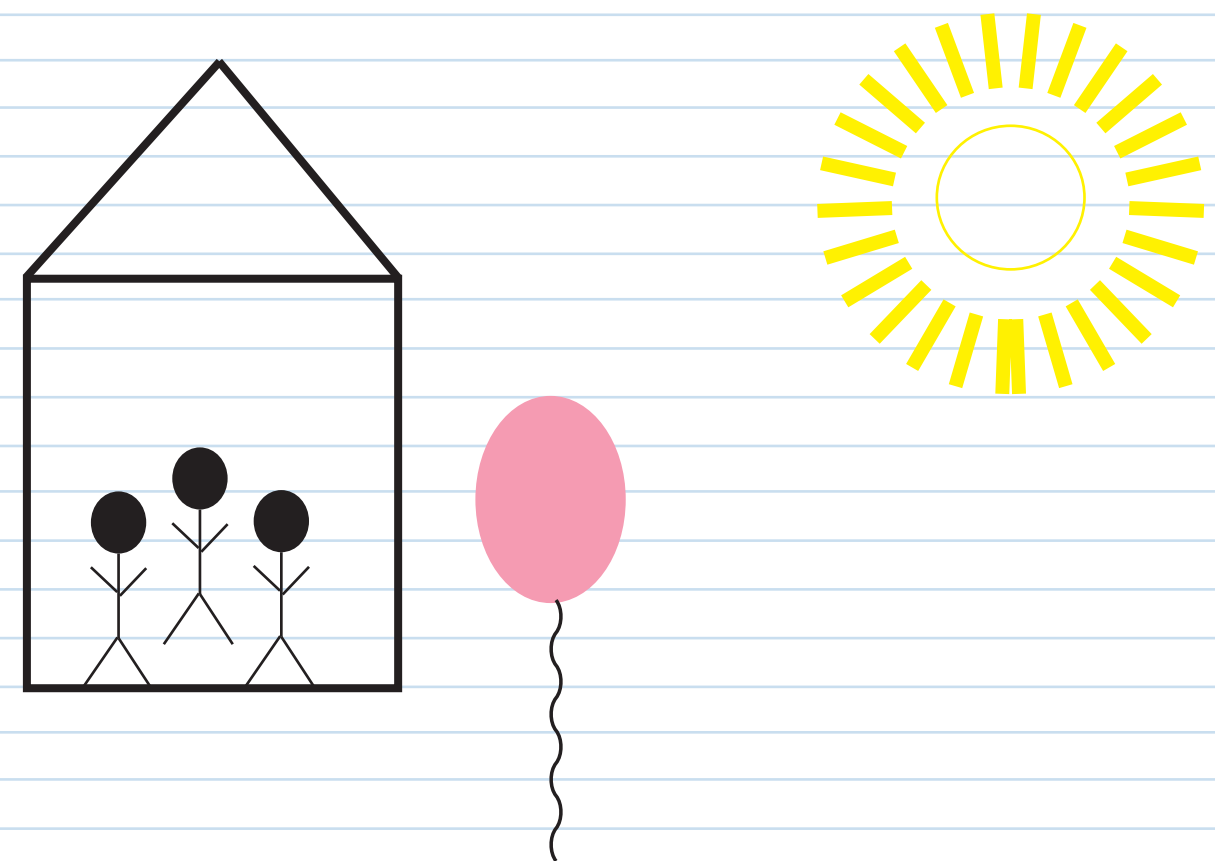
Games are also something we really liked to dabble in during the quarantine. I started playing chess (believe me I am no good, yet), I loved playing Qwixx (a mix between Domino, Yahtzee and Rummikub) and of course card games were not off the table. Lots of spare time was filled with either drinking a beer in the sun, taking a walk or playing a game.

Another fun activity we had was our own beer tasting. Two of our roommates bought a couple of specialty beers and looked up some information about them. They even dressed up nicely to give us the full experience. It was a really fun night, especially after a few beers! And it almost cost us nothing. A good tip is to also buy some complimenting snacks for during the tasting.

One last activity I really enjoyed organizing with my roommates was our stay at home festival. I could really recommend doing something like this. All though I believe that a lot of student houses have already done this. The only things you need for this are some good music, a funky disco lamp of some sorts (one of my roommates bought one on Bol.com), and a nice little festival outfit. Of course it is still far from the real festival feeling, however it still is fun. And it saves you lots of money, you do not have to spend on festival tickets.

All in all, the circumstances were far from ideal. However, I do feel like all this adjusting has made me become much closer with the small group of people that I was allowed to see. We had to hang out together almost every night, since we were unable to get out of the house. We talked, and even when we had discussed all the topics left to discuss, we still managed to keep it fun. To be honest, I love being able to go out for drinks again, but I still am going to miss all these activities.

Lize van Looij



Dear Diary,



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, NO ONE IS TELLING ME WHAT TO DO NEXT.

From about the age of five, we know what to do. We go to school. We learn what two plus two is. We learn how to read and spell. Then we go to high school. We keep on learning. Now also about first loves, how to make new friends, how to go on vacation alone for the first time. After high school, they ask us what we want to be. We have no clue. They say: go to university, this will give you opportunities. So there we go, off to university. We leave our parent's homes. We study something we think will give us a job. Or if you're lucky, something you adore.

We read the academic texts we have to read. We do the tests we have to do. Once in a while, you meet an inspiring teacher. We party and go abroad. We do not worry, since for about four years we have a specific goal: get a degree. Then the time comes that we get our bachelor's. Then our master's. The world at our feet, all opportunities are open.

For the first time in forever, we can now decide what we really want to do. But isn't that also the most complex question ever? What do you want to dedicate your life to? Your career? Your goals? What are they? A very luxury problem in Western society, but it does not feel less true. Our problems are no longer material. We got everything we need. A safe home, a college education, a relatively efficient social system. Our problems are

instead existential. Millennials and Gen Z individuals need fulfillment, meaning, and happiness. And these needs become evidently clear when college is finished. Life seemed simple, but now hunting for a job just after COVID-19 my positive hopes shrink. Remarkably few job descriptions make my heart beat faster, and when they do, I am not entirely qualified or do not have enough experience. I know that my first job doesn't have to be perfect, but at least it should make me excited, right?

So yeah, for a few weeks I felt pretty sorry for myself. Did I even make the right choices? A college degree doesn't seem to make any difference anymore. Why didn't I study something more practical? It's so easy to overthink, especially while writing your master's thesis (seriously, I never heard someone say that they loved that process). It's easy to get in a downward spiral, but it's all about perspective. Because yes, it is scary to not have a certain path planned out. Not knowing where you will be a year from now, not knowing if you will get a job if you will be 'successful'. If you even want a job if it means working for companies you do not feel connected to.

On the other hand: who even says that getting a steady job is the next step to take? Okay yes, society does. Just like it tells you to go to college. But now I have come to

crossroads again. I have the option to listen, to get a steady job, to do what is 'expected'. Because that's the thing about getting a job: it's easy and above all comfortable. You know that you will be paid at the end of the month and you know you what to do during the week. But I also have the option to really think about what I really want to do, to set goals and pursue these with determination and passion. Since now is the time, I have nothing to lose and I have never been freer in my life. But that is the thing about freefalling: jumping is the scariest part. Am I prepared to take the risk, to work hard, to handle financial insecurity?

So dear diary, to motivate me and everyone else who is struggling with life questions, I will outline some motivational thoughts to get through your small or big existential crisis. For anyone who wants to change his or her course, but needs more courage to take the leap.

There is no age limit for finding your passion. You might have found it when you were twelve, while others will not find out until they are 50. The important thing is, keep trying new things and pay attention. What really gives you goosebumps, what makes you really feel alive? Think about this and how you can include these feelings in your (professional) life. It is never too late to pursue what you really want in life.

Don't think, just do. Just last week, horrible news put

me with both feet on the ground. A friend who I met during a semester abroad passed away in a hit and run accident. She was 23. I was horrified and couldn't sleep for a couple of days. I felt guilty that a horrible accident like this was needed for me to realize that I shouldn't take life for granted. But it really is like that. If you will postpone things you want to do because you're scared or for any other reason, you might not be able to them at all.

Do not compare yourself with the paths of others. LinkedIn is a genius, but at the same time nerve-wracking platform. Just like Instagram, it seems that everyone has their life figured out. You see that your connections land their dream jobs, start successful businesses, complete course after course. But the older I get (lol, grandma talking) the more I start to realize that bluffing is also a very big part of professional career paths. Because if you don't believe in yourself, who will? So instead of not valuing my degree, I should be proud of these achievements. In the end, we are all just doing something, trying to figure out life. Just make sure you surround yourself with people who support and inspire you, not with people who make you feel insecure and doubtful.

Change goes hand in hand with a feeling of having no control. But you can plan whatever you want, things will go differently anyway. The cliché that clichés are always true is true. Just listen to the heart. Does it beat faster? Then the direction is right.

Alright, end of message. Speak to you soon.

xoxo


Noah Vink



Dear Diary,

FORGOTTEN TOO SOON

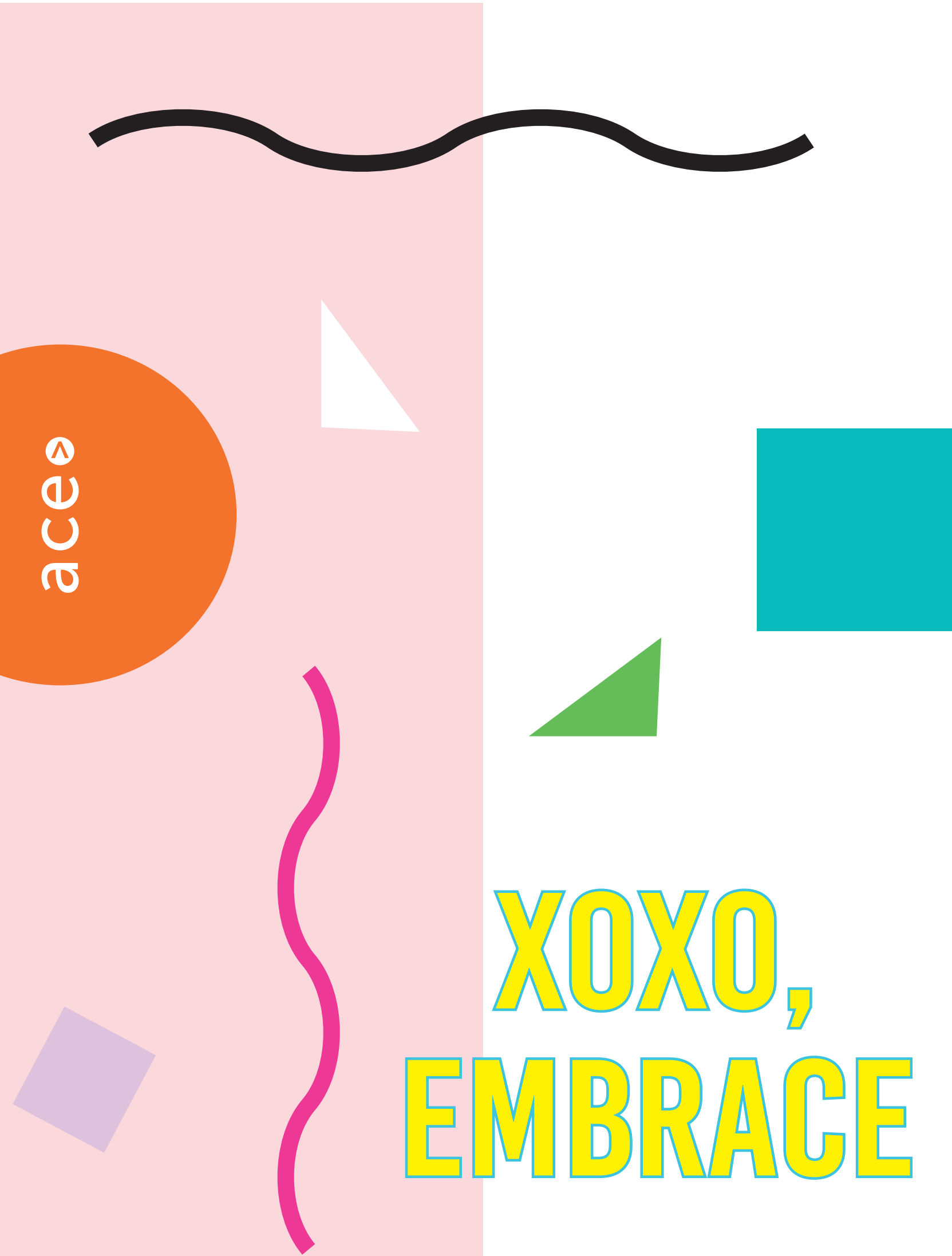
With corona coming to an imagery end, making most people forget that it is still around, I want to start this entry and remind myself that I still have to be careful. No matter if you followed the news within the last few months, it is almost impossible to not have heard about corona, Black lives matter or pride month. All of these have one thing in common: the media covered several stories relating to them and most people started posting on social media as a response. However, the media coverage and the media interest of people in particular started to go down again, making people stop spreading awareness about these movements and issues.

Although I wish corona was over, it is not. At least not yet. I found myself forgetting about certain measures I adapted to when Covid-19 started and so did the majority of people as well. However, it is important to realize that it is not over yet and we have to continue being careful, especially with big groups. I am more than happy to hopefully return to normal life completely in the next few months and I could probably write pages about the boredom, hopelessness and frustration of the last months.  The black lives matter movement gained a lot of social media support resulting from the death of George Floyd, making many people try to spread awareness and education through social media. Nonetheless, people started posting less and if they even adapted to the values, they promoted on social networks is the bigger question. It can be seen how petitions and protests can really make a difference, even if it's only a small start. Therefore, it is important that everyone continues to use their voice until everyone can live in a safe world. This might take a while, but as already mentioned, small change was achieved already. Even if one person can only change the mind of one person, they still had an impact on the world becoming a better place. Social media is only the beginning of making an effort in order to help.

June was also the month of celebrating pride, at least in the countries that allow it. 29 countries enable same sex marriage today, which is still not enough. Although we are moving to a better and accepting world, it is essential to keep striving for being better. I will continue to post about pride on my social media to celebrate it, even without pride month. Also, I will keep up calling out others for their homophobic or even slight not respectful views of the community. Even though I noticed most people still do not like to listen when someone is talking about certain bad views and acts, they do, it will be necessary to continue calling them out until everyone sees that love is love.

That means, even after pride month is ending and black lives matter moves more into the background of our everyday lives, we should not stop fighting for what is right. Call out the people who use gay as an insult or spread homophobia. **Call out the people who use micro aggression** or still think someone is superior to someone else due to skin tone, sexuality or something else. Remember to stay safe until there is a cure for corona. Enjoy the freedom you have and acknowledge the privileges you have in your life and how you can use them to help people without these privileges. Use your voice and always be open to learn about things you might be wrong about. I am aware that I still have a lot to educate myself about and I hope I can use the knowledge of others to strive for a better self every day.

Tabea Nordhausen



aceo

XOXO,
EMBRACE