



My First Post-Vax Adventure

June 23, 2021 By [Shawn Decker](#)

Last weekend my partner, Gwenn, and I took a trip for the first time since the end of 2019. Over the last year+, we've stuck close to home for the longest stretch of our two decades-plus relationship. To say that travel has been a part of our lives is an understatement. In the earliest days of our love story, we found ourselves flying all over the country to show that sero-diverse (magnetic) couples can and do have healthy relationships. 2020 was the first year that we didn't step foot in an airport...

So, it makes sense that our initial foray back into travel would be a two-hour car ride. Start small, right? We were visiting friends, and ended up staying in a hotel for a few days. All of our close friends had been vaccinated, but we were also around many people who probably were not. We live in Virginia, where the overall vaccination rate is good and the numbers of new infections are low.

I gotta say, getting out of town was great. There were moments when it felt like we'd stepped into a time machine, returning to a pre-pandemic pre-panic lifestyle. My faith in the vaccine's ability to protect me should I come in contact with someone who is unknowingly infected is extremely helpful. To put it in an HIV educational sphere, being vaccinated for COVID-19 feels like walking around an orgy with a boner and a condom on. Granted, I haven't had that life experience (yet!), but having lived through one pandemic, I have find it helpful to process this new one through the lens of my life as an educator and- more importantly- a human being.

Now, were there moments when the shadow of the last year and the uncertainty of the viral future came to the forefront? Of course. Job's infamous quote from Arrested Development raced through my head a couple of times: "I've made a huge mistake."

But I was able to get through it. I'm following updated information on COVID-19, and the Delta variant. I wish that it wouldn't take another wave for more people to get vaccinated, but at this point we are responsible for our own individual health. And the best way to protect ourselves is to get the vaccine. And yes, I know we live in a world where access is not equitable, but in the context of where I am traveling, I'm confident that I am coming in contact with people who have had ample access to vaccines for months now.

For instance, last night I visited my brother for the first time since the pandemic hit... at a bowling alley. A few months ago I couldn't have imagined doing any of the things I've done in the last week. But I'm extremely thankful for the vaccine and what it has allowed me to do. I'm also highly

aware that there could easily come a time when I feel the need to lock it down again... maybe that's why I felt waves of euphoria as I listened to a friend tell a familiar story last weekend, or watched my brother roll a strike. After 2020 it all seems so precarious.

But it also reminds us of how precious and necessary our bonds to each other truly are.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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