

READER SUBMISSION

5 Stages of Getting Vaccinated

NAFISA NOWSHIN

The current efforts of nationwide vaccination against Covid-19 is the entire buzz. Many people are getting vaccinated and expressing relief. So it got me thinking how these people with so many diverse opinions are deciding to get vaccinated. The result? This article, which follows a fictional character through five stages of his vaccination journey.

DENIAL

At this stage, our fictional person would disbelieve the vaccine to be real or effective. He would go through all the unverified posts on social media about how this is a “plot” or “scam”. He would believe every other speculation about the vaccine, of it being fake or having side effects that can only occur in science fiction. But what he won't do is check the sources of these news pieces or try to listen to actual experts talking about it.

SCEPTICISM

In the second stage, he would start to shift his viewpoint with the increasing social media posts debunking the rumors about the vaccine. He thinks “So maybe it's real, but then again I will never be able to get it. I will need to know someone high up to get



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

on the vaccine list. Which I don't, so why bother trying?”

“OMUIK” TOOK THE VACCINE

Now he would start to learn about people from his immediate and not so immediate circles getting vaccinated. He sees them putting statuses and posting pictures about it. Now he is going to experience some serious FOMO. At first, it will be one or two

people. But gradually the circle will start to close in. Then he would start getting phone calls from these people saying they took the vaccine and ask why he hasn't done so yet. He will not have a good response.

IT ACTUALLY IS EASY

Now he is in the stage where he wishes he could get the vaccine but won't admit it. He starts inquiring about how to register for

the vaccine. He also asks around about side effects from the people who already took the vaccine. He still has some of his initial scepticism but decides to give it a go. He attempts registration but is determined to give up if it seems too much work. But to his surprise, it's very easy and takes so little time to register.

THE VACCINE SELFIE

The day finally comes, he arrives at the vaccination centre. He is excited but also a little nervous. Will it hurt? Will he be able to hold his composure? Finally, his turn comes. He goes up to the nurse, sits down, and braces himself. The nurse proceeds with the injection, but then he remembers the most important part. The photo! He asks her to wait, takes out his mobile, and gives it to someone nearby to take a photo. Now he makes what he considers a brave face. The camera clicks away and our fictional character finally gets his vaccine.

Now he can also put vaccine photos on social media.

Nafisa Nowshin is a computer science graduate from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. She can be reached at nafisanowshin.13@gmail.com

Styling Your Short Hair

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

I have always worn my hair short. From bowl-cuts to bob cuts and voguish pixies to wispy side-swept fringes, I've tried it all. Short hair is a statement on its own and over the decades, it has broken various gender norms and classical connotations. But some days, the Mia Wallace-esque hair you're trying to pull off ends up making you look like Lord Farquaad.

Taming these tresses of stress can be a pain when the tiny hairs stick to your sweaty forehead. Here are five versatile hairstyles that will make you look like a million bucks.

BEND THE TREND WITH BUBBLE BRAIDS

This is a fun way to give dimension to any hairstyle. This hairstyle has bombarded our feeds with its resurgence and needless to say, it's super easy and low effort. Part your hair your preferred way and take a section of hair from the crown of your head. With a clear or colourful elastic band, tie the strand of hair at the root. When you're done, you can take a few strands of hair from the side and tie it again the same way, spacing them a couple of inches apart. Prolong the process until you're happy with your plaits. Tease the “bubbles” so that you get a cute, fluffy pigtail. Do the same on your side and rock this *insta*-worthy hairstyle.

GO BANANAS WITH BANDANAS

Whether you are having a bad hair day or looking to spice up your everyday look, bandanas, and scarfs are a great addition to your look book. The simplest way is folding the scarf/bandana in a triangular shape and tying it towards the nape of your neck, keeping it a few inches away from your hairline. You can fold the bandana and wear it as a headband, knotting the ends into bunny ears, or sport a casual sporty look. Pull out a few sections of hair from the sides to frame your face, and soften up the look a little. Mix and match to create endless possibilities.

FEEL FIERCE WITH A FAUX HAWK

Bring back the 80's with a modern twist on the mainstream punk – mohawk. If you're tired of the cutesy looks and want to try something edgy and cool, a faux hawk is your call. For this, pull back all of your hair as



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

tightly as you can to the back of your hair and braid it starting from your hairline towards the back. You can braid the sides of your hair to add a little texture. If you have shaved sides or a pixie, faux hawks become easier to achieve with hair products.

SASS UP YOUR STYLE WITH SPACE BUNS

Looking for something effortlessly cute? Space buns will give you the best soft rounded vibe. Flaunting these half-up, half-down mini-buns makes you stand out from the generic crowd. Hairstyles with bangs and tendrils make this style look more flattering.

ELEVATE YOUR ESSENCE WITH ACCESSORIES

Butterfly clips, barrettes, and sparkly headbands – these dainty embellishments are back better than ever. Short-haired people can never have enough of these in their arsenal. Be it braids, ponytails, or up-dos, hair accessories can make any coiffure appear wonderfully whimsical.

Anyone can pull off short hair. If you're still thinking about chopping your hair off, you know what to do.

Farnaz Fawad Hasan spends most of her time dreaming about chicken nugget castles. Tell her to snap back to reality at fawadhasan@gmail.com

The Fluid Personality Conundrum

BUSHRA ZAMAN & RASHA JAMEEL

Liquid (noun) [C/U]: a substance that flows easily and is neither a gas nor a solid.

From the given definition, we can gather that a liquid's most distinguishable characteristic is its ability to conform to the nature of its surroundings, be it a vessel or just a flat surface. Could the same theory be applied to people who mould different aspects of their personalities according to the company they keep?

Upon conducting some research on the theory, we came across the following from a behavioural study:

“A surrounding environment often influences which information needs to be attentively processed in certain ways and also determines an appropriate action set or behavioral repertoire. That is, the surrounding environment often determines the *modus operandi* of the brain.” (Choong-Hee Lee & Inah Lee, 2013)

So, essentially, people adapt to the people *around* them, with the latter's behaviour acting as different stimuli influencing the former's behaviour. In the pursuit of being accepted by just about everyone, it's hard to stay constant – to

ME AT HOME



ME AT WORK



ME WITH FRIENDS



ME BY MYSELF



We activating my personality switch based on which friend I'm hanging out with



be just one version of yourself.

It's this pressure that influences people's decision to conform. Trying to be well liked becomes an addictive practice in people's daily lives, almost instinctual at one point. When you're amongst family, chances are, you'd want to make your parents feel proud of you, the entirety of your existence. The only way to ensure that happens is to take on the role of the family favourite. In order to add further meaning to that sentiment, you might just throw in some steadfast obedience and you'll fit right into a conservative Bangladeshi family. This isn't always a forced adaptation of course; for family-oriented individuals, family is the biggest source of comfort.

Being around friends, on account of potentially sharing similar goals and ideas, calls for a more laid-back attitude in the case of others.

Samantha Khan*, 20, says, “I have an incredibly difficult time having a proper conversation with my parents. With my friends, there's this sense of liberation where I know I won't be judged for any of my choices. They offer me a sense of comfort that my parents can't.”

Offering a different perspective of parent-child interactions, 24-year-old Ishmam Khandaker* says, “My equation with my friends is a bit more relaxed as I don't feel responsible for them the way I do with my parents. With my family, I'm more practical. With my friends, I'm another dorky kid.”

However, people occasionally tend to over-indulge in carefree behaviour around friends and become highly susceptible to some degree of recklessness.

In an office environment, the situation varies even more as you find yourself attempting to strike a balance between professionalism and friendliness. Overstepping boundaries is unacceptable. Therefore, you bring out your somewhat reserved self, one who doesn't laugh too loudly and refrains from communicating in terms deemed inappropriate for workplaces. Finally, when you're by yourself for a brief moment throughout a day, you feel... conflicted, about yourself. The conundrum presents itself.

Prioritising different aspects of your personality in different social circles, are you losing sight of who you really are?

Perhaps this is where the harm lies in your efforts towards fitting in. The fear of being the odd person out, the discomfort associated with a lack of popularity, the peer pressure to conform, has perhaps led you to a state of dissociation within yourself. The end result is a personality, fractured. The more you try to become everyone else, the less you become of *you*. The conundrum intensifies.

Let's take a look at how the Covid-19 pandemic has factored into our social interactions.

Portraying different aspects of your personality according to context can indeed get more complicated during a period of isolation, where there's a lack of stimuli in the surrounding environment. They could be flabbergasted upon seeing someone after a very long time, finding themselves at a loss for words despite having many thoughts run through their heads. To the friend they are speaking to, they may just seem spaced out. This may cause them to hug the concerned individual to help make up for the words lost, despite being the human equivalent of a tree: extremely uncomfortable to hug (during pre-pandemic times).

Of course, extroverts are perfectly capable of remaining... extroverted. The pandemic may even make you want to be more outgoing than before. You could find yourself speed walking in parks making

conversation with strangers. You may be unaffected by the pandemic, as was with Dolly Zaman*, 22, who said, “My communication from the hostel with both my family and friends were over phone/social networking sites. So not meeting many people didn't affect me so much. But I did miss the casual face to face meetings with my friends and batch mates.”

If you were already an introvert, the pandemic may have contributed to your general appreciation of being at home, says high-schooler June Rahman*, “I am believed to be extroverted around school friends, but in general remain aloof and cold to others. During the pandemic, I have found myself to be communicating more with everyday faces than I used to in the past.”

Meeting someone outside of those from home could cause you to stammer or forget words while attempting to converse. Two approaches to dealing with this issue could be to either fake an emergency and run for your life to hide from embarrassment or to honestly explain how you are not used to conversations with anyone outside of home in recent times and will take some time to get used to things.

There's always the risk of misconceptions arising due to the changes in behavioural aspects selectively occurring depending on the social group you are with. Being less able to speak with people you do not see often, but perfectly conversing with others at home, being known for being as stiff as a tree when it comes to hugging but willingly giving bear hugs to loved ones, telling your family you abhor walks but being known for loving walks with friends are all tiny inconsistencies in your behaviour in social groups that once identified, could cause those who know you to doubt the authenticity of your personality.

This is because even the trivial habits and personality attributes you see in an individual give you a sense of familiarity. Such trivial characteristics are combined to constitute your general idea of the person and helps you identify them. If these characteristics do not hold true, you ask yourself, do I really know this person? Did they pretend to be a certain way in order

to get along with me? If so, do they have an ulterior motive? Before you know it, the concerned individual may be deemed as untrustworthy.

Step one to overcoming this issue is to accept yourself as you are. There is no superior personality, there is only what is deemed as morally incorrect and correct. Seeking self-improvement should not be correlated with the alteration of opinions or aspects of your personality that are not causing harm. Therefore, there is no need to, for example, convince yourself of being fond of a popular music genre or a particular hobby when amongst a particular social group in order to engage in conversation with them.

Keeping up appearances is hard as is, and being true to yourself cannot only help increase self-confidence, but also other's confidence in you by making you seem to be genuine. According to psychiatrist and author Joanna Cannon, “Instead of living our lives in monochrome, it might be more fulfilling to search for the colour, and the variance, in those around us, and we can then allow ourselves to be accepted for who we really are – not for the fragments of our characters we allow people to see.”

Human personalities can be very complicated, and complexities aren't necessarily flaws. Deviations in behaviour according to context are a survival skill that may just exist eternally. The conundrum will always be there.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy

References

1. National Center for Biotechnology Information (May 10, 2013). *Contextual behaviour and neural circuits*.
2. Psychology Today (July 13, 2016). *We All Want To Fit In*.

Bushra Zaman likes books, art, and only being contacted by email. Find her at bushrazaman31@yahoo.com

Rasha Jameel is your neighborhood feminist-*apu-who-writes-big-essays*. Remind her to also finish writing her bioinformatics research paper at rasha.jameel@outlook.com