



**CONGENIAL
TELEGRAM
NUMBER06**

New Year's resolutions are a chance to review the old and change the new. But New Year's resolutions feel different when you also celebrate your birthday on last day of December. For me, resolutions are a chance to change every part of the next year of my life.

I have big big ambitions, and the hardest change for 2021 will be letting go of almost every one of them. The most important thing is to keep going. It's to write in my journal daily. It's to wash the dishes and get enough sleep. It's to hope for a 40th birthday party with my friends at the end of all this.

During the pandemic, it's been most helpful to think ahead only a month. Long-term goals are on hold until we know better what the long-term will look like. At the beginning of each month in 2020, I picked 3 or 4 tasks I knew I could achieve in the next 30 days.

2021 isn't the hard reset as years past. We'll be carrying our 2020 survival skills forward. I'm carrying a few projects with me, instead of starting something brand new.

This zine is one of those projects.

I think I can write CONGENIAL TELEGRAM every month. I know that I want to. But the only thing I know for sure is that I'm writing CT06 today. Whether I finish will be seen.

Writing in 2020 was difficult, lingering at the bottom of my guilt-ridden todo list. I've worked my whole life to build habits and routines, and every single one was lost to the pandemic.

I carry a notebook to write when I'm out—but I never went out. I use cafés as office space—but they're no longer safe.

Because I wasn't exploring, because I wasn't reading, because I wasn't thinking about anything except COVID-19—the numbers, the deaths, the warnings—I wasn't writing.

There isn't much to write about when every day is the same. When your brain is stuck on the same topic for months, there isn't much energy left for reading. I barely even watched TV in 2020, while everyone else rewatched their favourite comfort media.

My body was still, but my brain was not. I had no attention left to give.

Of course I'm happy 2020 is done. But the pandemic is not. Here in Canada, the vaccine is reserved for health workers, at-risk seniors, and Indigenous populations. And now that production has been delayed, we don't know exactly when the general public will get access.

I can stay home. There are so many people who cannot, so I'm staying away from restaurants and shops, from beaches and trails. I can stay home because the government is paying my bills.

And I'm so fucking grateful for that.

But I'm not happy. I'm not thriving. I'm OK—in the absolutely least definition of the word.

Over my holiday break, I decided to do the farmers market again. Now I'm not so sure. I committed to writing this zine by creating the CT06.pages file as soon as I finished CT05.

But as soon as my January 15th deadline arrived, writing about zines was the last thing I wanted to do. How can I teach you about zines when I haven't made one in more than a month? Will I even remember how to make CT07?

CHANGE YOUR VIEW!

When it feels like you've been writing the same words, again and again, it's a good sign that you need to take a break. It's easy to forget that part of being a writer is being a reader.

We need input on which to ruminate. Ideas, images, pieces of dialogue, and remembered facts are all mixed together in our brains until we turn them into our own output.

Go out and find something new. Don't starve your brain.

by Jess Driscoll on January 20, 2021