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*Gazania in the garden, Douglas E. Welch*

For the weekend...

*from Douglas E. Welch*

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Issue #10: February 11, 2022

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*Photo by [Stefan Steinbauer](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

## Playing Defense

We have all dealt with the daily turmoil these last 2 years -- masks, vaccines, temperature checks, vaccine cards, and more. Throughout it all we have tied again and again to "get back to normal" but I think this has exposed one difficult truth to it all. While being stubborn can benefit us at many times in our lives, we need to recognize those times when it is better to retreat, regroup, and rethink our actions.

### An example

I was talking with a friend who has a quarterly job consulting for a college. She detailed the process she had to go through in order to be "allowed" back on campus on a daily basis. It involved training videos, daily vaccine confirmation, and temperature check confirmed with a wristband along with all the typical COVID policies like social distancing.

Listening to her talk, I thought that -- if we are forcing ourselves to jump through extraordinary hoops just to work in person -- perhaps we shouldn't be trying to work in person at all. The arduous nature of the process clearly shows that, perhaps, we are being much too stubborn in our attempt to reach normalcy. We are banging our heads against a wall when it would be better to continue using alternative methods which are easier and keep everyone safer.

The word that always comes to my mind is arrogance. Humans have limitless arrogance when it comes to facing issues. We think we can overcome anything by force. We fool ourselves into thinking we have conquered COVID only to have it come roaring back. We are our own worst enemies when we remove processes and protections that help to mitigate the problem, choosing instead to fight it face to face like gunfighters at high noon.

### The Defensive

Perhaps there are times when it is better to be on the defensive. Any scholar of war will tell you that defense is often easier than offense and each has its place in any battle. We have shown that we have the ability to play a decent defense when it comes to COVID. Perhaps we should do just that for a little while longer.

Of course, ego enters into it once again. When on the defense, we can feel weak, helpless, and -- heaven forbid -- unmanly. We want to feel we are fighting the good fight even though we have been doing just that for the last 2 years. Protecting ourselves is a fight in itself. It takes sacrifice, loneliness, financial impacts, and more. Yet, it also keeps many of us safe and alive.

For me, these last 2 years have been focused on keeping as many people alive as possible. I am in the enviable position of being able to work from home, have items delivered, and basically continue my life as it was. I know, though, that others are not nearly as lucky. They have been forced into horrible situations of poverty or daily exposure to the virus. For them, I limit my deliveries and my in-person interactions as much as possible. I wear my mask even when it isn't required to protect both them and myself. These are things we all can and should be doing.

Instead, we are forcing children back into crowded schools, workers back into crowded offices -- both hotbeds of infection, even before COVID. We fight to remove important restrictions on public gatherings, masks, vaccines, and more. Why? We know these controls help. Are we simply ignoring the dangers just so we can feel more normal? This is foolishness. Better under restrictions and alive than "free" and dead.

### A War of Attrition

Our battle with COVID is a war of attrition. It will eventually burn itself out if we stay on the defensive and take all the precautions to prevent it spread and its horrible health complications. We need do nothing more than wait it out -- if we can understand and avoid our arrogance. Arrogance causes us to stage suicide charges across the fields of normalcy in an attempt to pretend that life has changed in fundamental ways. Have we learned nothing from our previous fights against disease and traditional wars?

**Life WILL return to some form of normal if we protect ourselves so we are around to enjoy it. Exposing yourself to COVID needlessly is a fool's game. Play the long, defensive, game so you are here to enjoy the benefits later.**

## 4 Interesting Links

Here are 4 Interesting links for your weekend reading and watching



*And now the story of the London Wall, one of the oldest structures in the city. But how much can you still see? via Jago Hazzard*



## How to Grow Saffron Crocus

by [Bren Haas](#)

A few years back I was trying to find the spice Saffron locally but had to purchase online. It was EXPENSIVE and now after finding my own saffron crocus bulbs to grow I see way. In this post I share how to grow saffron along with a few fun facts about the plant.

First off, it is said that saffron is the *most expensive spice in the world*. The reason it is so expensive is each bloom produces only

3 stigmas which are dried. Not to mention there is a three week harvesting period for each bloom. I can't wait to try this for myself. In the video below I show how I am planting my saffron crocus in a container.

Read



## Take a peek inside the Sugar Lab, L.A.'s 3-D-printing candy shop

There's something Willy Wonka-esque happening in an industrial studio at the edge of Lincoln Heights.

Tiny truffles, sugar cubes and dissolving drink additions that can infuse a cocktail with glitter and bitters are being built seemingly out of thin air, one layer at a time in whirring machines that create intricate, edible, colorful candies.

You won't encounter a top-hatted candy magnate at Sugar Lab, a 3-D-printing confectionery where science meets sweets. Instead, there's a small team of architects, designers and chefs who tinker with sugar sculptures and recipes,



building with modded and food-safe 3-D printers that are more typically used for metalworking.

Read

## Please Don't Say These Things to Someone Who Doesn't Drink



The new year is here, and with it came a big night for drinking. The holidays typically come with a lot of them, from Thanksgiving to boozy Secret Santa exchanges to New Years Eve, there are frequent opportunities to gather and make merry—most of them with gallons of alcohol.

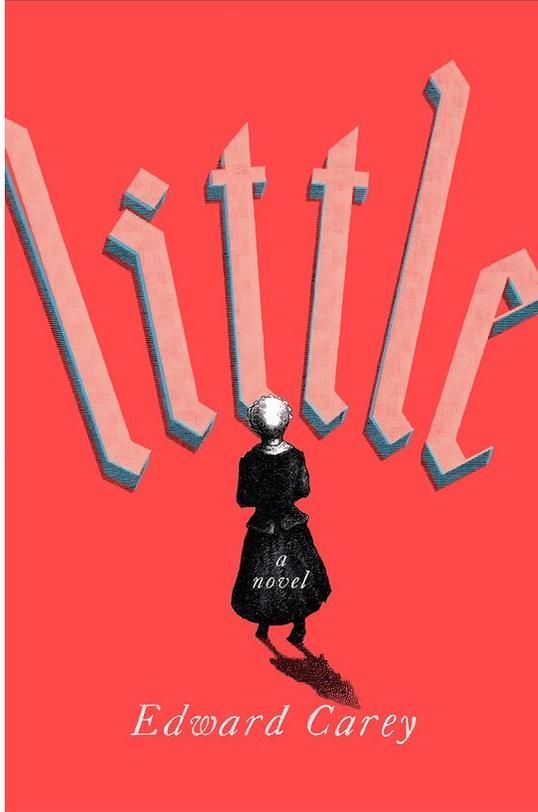
It can be a fraught time if you're sober or trying to limit your alcohol intake. With increased gatherings often comes increased pressure to drink, which, even if meant congenially, can make a non-drinking guest uneasy. But, according to the [Washington Post](#), a full 30% of American adults don't drink at all. So in the spirit of respecting people's choices, privacy, and comfort, here are some things *not* to say when someone declines an adult beverage.

Read

## Little

by Edward Carey

n 1761, a tiny, odd-looking girl named Marie is born in a village in Switzerland. After the death of her parents, she is apprenticed to an eccentric wax sculptor and whisked off to the seamy streets of Paris, where they meet a domineering widow and her quiet, pale son. Together, they convert an abandoned monkey house into an exhibition hall for wax heads, and the spectacle becomes a sensation. As word of her artistic talent spreads, Marie is called to Versailles, where she tutors a princess and saves Marie Antoinette in childbirth. But outside the palace walls, Paris is roiling: The



revolutionary mob is demanding heads, and . . . at the wax museum, heads are what they do.

In the tradition of Gregory Maguire's *Wicked* and Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus*, Edward Carey's *Little* is a darkly endearing cavalcade of a novel—a story of art, class, determination, and how we hold on to what we love.

[Amazon](#)

[Check it out from the LA Public Library](#)



***Apples, Douglas E. Welch***

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