

**My Name:** Kathie Elliot

**My Town:** Brisbane

### **My COVID19 story**

As 2020 takes its final curtain call, albeit without a standing ovation, there are still some things I'm truly grateful for that this year has brought us. So perhaps a golf clap, rather than thunderous applause is in order?!

For years myself and other people with disability and those managing chronic pain have pushed for the opportunity for flexible workplaces. For me it is about being able to work from home in order to manage my symptoms, for others it is to reduce the burden of travel, and I think for all of us we can be far more productive due to being comfortable in our own surroundings. For many employers this was just too difficult and they couldn't comprehend how this would work. In fact I started working for myself as a consultant for that exact reason and haven't looked back. However COVID-19 has changed all that, and miraculously most of the barriers have been removed for remote working. My hope for 2021 and beyond is that flexible workplaces will remain, allowing many more people an opportunity to work and contribute, from their home offices or their beds – whatever works! As my photo shows, often for me working from bed is the only option as I manage my pain levels or yet another subluxation or dislocation due to my EDS (which affects my connective tissue). I do have wonderful executive assistants – even though they tend to sleep on the job!

The online world has not only changed the way we work, it has also opened up the world to many of us. The ability to watch concerts, ballets, comedy gigs, participate in couch choirs, get involved in Zoom Yoga, join a trivia group or just connect with friends and family from near and far. Whilst nothing can replace IRL or face to face interactions, the chance to take a tour of the Louvre, or enjoy a concert from the Royal Albert Hall, was just amazing. Again something not everyone can experience, particularly if you have mobility or sensory issues, but has now provided so much joy to so many people.

Many businesses actually flourished by 'pivoting' (surely that's one of 2020's key buzz words!) in order to deliver their products and services online. And many were able to expand their geographical reach by doing so, whilst many also demonstrated huge social consciences through their acts of kindness – many we have witnessed on this page. I think 2020 has taught many of us to look beyond our own front gate, and in many cases disruption has allowed us to broaden our mindsets. To think of others. That's a big part of The Kindness Pandemic's ethos. Which we will definitely take in to 2021.

### **My act of intersectional kindness**