



## YOUTUBE LETTER: FINDING NEW FORMS

Hello Friends,

Life looks different now. Unexpected circumstances have required us to engage our world in new ways. We have had to rethink activities like work, school, worship, travel, and childcare. Our class alone underwent a digital transformation in order for us to continue. We have been stopped from approaching graduate education in the typical way... but in this we have the opportunity to establish new forms of being, learning, and engaging.

While typical and customary approaches to activities provide us with familiarity, we can at times take their function for granted. We assume certain practices will be readily available. Like travel... or visiting a grandparent. Attending a symphony... or hosting a family holiday gathering. They were always there.

The challenge we face in this new context, then, is how to conceive of new forms for “old” or previously typical functions. We need to establish new forms to maintain fundamental functions within education. For example, a few weeks ago I stressed the importance of figuring out new ways of networking in the absence of conferences and other “typical” forms of professional development. The vital need to foster a professional network while in graduate school has not disappeared amidst the pandemic, rather I might argue it has become even more essential. Thus, we must innovatively establish new forms to ensure this customary function is maintained.

Musical instruments have a “typical” or “customary” way they should be played. But when you consider another vantage point...when you see things anew... you can create new forms of being, beauty, and engagement for yourself and others. This brief musical clip of an artist who finds a new form to play a guitar highlights what I am trying to convey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbndgwfG22k>

I am passing this along as an encouragement, to acknowledge our worlds have changed, but that this does not prohibit us from thriving... from creating new forms that strengthen oneself and others.

Standing with you,

Joshua Travis Brown, Ph.D.