

# Waiting for the Answer

Category: The Vaccine

written by deb y felio | January 4, 2021

It's tricky—the balance between deserving, needing, and entitled. Who gets the vaccine first? Who gets it last? What part of the decision is privilege. What part experimental.

I am a noncompromised age-qualifying mental health counselor who has worked remotely, from the confines of my home. I am not a high-risk-by-exposure candidate, unless I want to be. I have remained masked and distant throughout the pandemic. What are my response and responsibility to having an invitation to be at the front of the line?

The issue for me is deep. I'm defined as white. Female. Christian. Privileged. I'm Southern-rooted, which has its own history of being last (except in SEC football). I'm defined as so many things by so many. Do I have a responsibility to accept the first general round of vaccination? Would that be a service to others? Maybe the sample that goes into my body offers feedback regarding the reaction to or effectiveness of the vaccine?

Do I accept the decision of others? Do I submit to their authority, obey the science? How do I measure my privilege against my age, when I know that maltreatment of some by the medical community makes them feel hesitation and fear about coming forward to receive the vaccine, prevents any real equality of opportunity. I have spent years in and out of these communities. I have experienced suspicion.

What are the risks if I don't take the offered dose? A postponement of in-person sessions with others waiting for the vaccine? A postponement of being with out-of-state family members—adults and children—who are in the high-risk/compromised categories. A possible miss on getting the vaccine if shortages begin to appear?

And what are the risks if I do? Waiting to see how my body reacts? Testing the effectiveness with unvaccinated family members who may never feel safe enough? Realizing there isn't a vaccine to erase the effects of isolation and my newborn awareness of everyone around me?

Maybe the vaccine card—or the lack of one—is to be just one more way each of us will be defined and yet still unknown.

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