



TIPS FOR STAYING SANE WHILE WORKING FROM WITH THE HOME

We've reviewed articles, webinars and interviewed our clients to better understand why it is difficult to work at home right now and suggest a couple of tips to keep you zen.

As coaches and consultants, we have talked to a lot of people over the past weeks, reviewed tons of articles, watched a zillion webinars about this topic, tried out different methods "on" ourselves and with our families and colleagues.

THE QUESTIONS THAT WE WANTED TO FIND ANSWERS TO WERE:

- What really going on here
- Is there *anything* we can do to stay sane during this time?

What is it that we really struggle with, when we have to stay at home and work? Why are many of us not getting as much done as we are used to? Why don't we feel as balanced or as resilient as we usually feel?

Finally, why are so many of us not sleeping well and having "vivid dreams"?

Now as you may guess, as coaches and consultants, we take a psychological approach

think.

TRUTH #1: WE'RE DOING IT ALL, AND ALL IN THE SAME PLACE

You may have already realized that since we started the confinement, we are all professionals, parents, partners, chefs, and friends all at once, and all at the kitchen table.

This can create tensions around boundaries and the necessity to establish them.

The constant juggling between roles, negotiation needed to make our family understand what role we need/want to be in for the next, say, 2 hours, is a battle and comes at a price: it demands lots of energy, focus and very often simply fails to work.

In the "good old days" (before COVID-19), we could actually work from home, but, today as we are "trapped" at home, we're actually not only working from home, but

working **WITH** the home: with the kids running around, the dog barking, the meal cooking and with our spouse/partner entering the room while we are trying to get our work done.

And this phenomenon triggers several emotional reactions at the same time.

There is no "one size fits all" feeling that we are experiencing, it several feelings at the same time: impatience, anxiety, boredom, frustration.

TRUTH #2: MULTITASKING IS A FAIRY-TALE

Because of truth #1, you may have also realized that plans for clearing out your closets, organizing your holiday pictures from last year, learning a new language, doing yoga, reading the books you have always wanted to read – all the projects that you wanted to do ... and all the progress you wanted to make have simply gone out of the window.

None if it is happening!

At this stage, to be clear, we want to normalize this phenomenon, rather than make you feel bad about it.

It is not happening for most of us and there is nothing wrong with you.

Trying to wear many hats at the same time, deal with very different stakeholders almost at the same time, is incredibly energy-consuming.

In particular your emotional self-management is working

heavy shifts to do justice to all those different demands.

Neuroscientists will confirm: our brains are not capable to do two things at once. What we can do is to switch between tasks at a very high pace, but this is neither particularly efficient and it comes at a price called higher intellectual fatigue.

As a result, nobody else seems to be able to achieve this either. And, it is a worldwide phenomenon.

So, here are some ideas that may help with juggling with the many roles, duties and desires we are all holding – in that one place called home.

RESET YOUR REALITY AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR ENERGY

As mentioned before, it is a significant change to work *with* the home. Many of the boundaries that you intuitively had around you, that helped you to structure your life, days, attitudes and ways of being are now gone.

You still have all the various roles that you had before – but now under one roof! And, there is no possibility to “calm down” and digest work stress on the commute home.

- This new situation demands new routines to make boundaries between the phases more visible. Find a routine that best suits you!

For example: shower and get dressed to signal the start of your work day. Then, finish at a specific time each day to transition to private life again.

- Take time and space to adjust and don't overdo it: manage your energy.

- Many of us are not sleeping well, so try to avoid making it worse by eating late, watching Netflix until 3am, or having difficult conversations with your family in the evening. Try to relax before you go to sleep.

- Go offline early. Scientists tell us that watching screens (light-emitting readers) negatively affects sleep, and therefore we should stop using our smartphones at least one hour before we go to sleep.

Discover the illusive “switch off” buttons of your electronic devices!

SET REALISTIC TASKS

- It is really motivating to get things done, but as mentioned above, right now it is just extra difficult to accomplish anything beyond the basic necessities. So, set yourself realistic goals, work-related or private, and try to achieve them!

- Get into a flow. A flow is a state of full concentration where you lose the sense of time and space because you are fully focused on a task. Try to focus on one thing for at least 15 minutes without interruption (no phone, no kids, no tv) and submerge into the task at hand. This is incredibly rewarding and helps you to really achieve your task.

NURTURE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Our relationships are even more important at this time. Time spent with people will help you cope with isolation.

- In whatever way works for you, reach out and communicate regularly with colleagues, friends and family to stay in touch and stay connected.

- Remember when you are connecting with people, listening is as important as talking!

CREATE POSITIVE MOMENTS

- Positive moments could include taking time for yourself, connecting with others and exercising.

- Physical space may be limited, but our capacity to imagine is infinite: be playful, enjoy, make fun and create positive moments with your colleagues, family and friends.

BE KIND!

"In a world where you can be anything: be kind"

- Be kind to yourself: get enough sleep, eat well, take time off - even if it's only under the shower.

- Be kind to others: say thank you - for calling you, for caring about you, for helping you, reciprocate and offer random acts of kindness.

STAY SAFE AND SANE!