

April 2020

## THRIVING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

Hello

Thank you for attending the Embrace Working From Home Webinar and Here are the tips I shared and the special offers again.

Welcome to my Spring E-Book and what a strange and challenging Spring this is. I remember thinking a few months ago, that I would like the world to stop for a few weeks so I could catch up on all the things I want to do, but I never envisaged anything like this and I am reminded again to be careful what I wish for!!

Many of my clients are now working from home for the first time and finding it very challenging so I am running three webinars a week on how to embrace working from home and to feel empowered.

The feedback has been great so this month I am sharing my TOP TIPS on how to be super productive in your home environment.

Enjoy

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## Working From Home – How to Embrace it and Feel Empowered

Let's start with 'WHY' – always a very good place to start!

Obviously – the reason we are all being asked to work from home right now is it is to keep us 'SAFE' through these challenging times, to minimise the spread of Covid-19 and to protect our loved ones, colleagues and clients from unnecessary risk.

There is also a feeling of 'doing our bit' to support our communities by freeing up roads and necessary resources for the Emergency Services to deal with the severely ill to the best of their abilities.

If you have never had to work from home or have always felt you don't work effectively there – here is a reminder of some of the many benefits.

There are many benefits to working from home such as saving time and money, lack of interruptions, access to good nutrition, being able to walk outside in nature and creating your own working environment.

However, I also appreciate there are many challenges around working from home – a few here –

1. **ISOLATION** – it can be really lonely working on your own and many of you will miss the camaraderie and 'buzz' of the team around you.
2. **REDUCED MOTIVATION** – without the team around you, it can be too easy to just meander through the day, answering emails, checking social media, flitting from task to task and not really achieving anything.
3. **LACK OF ACCESS** to others can mean you don't get the chance to tap into their expertise, advice and support when you need it most.
4. **LACK OF PEER DISCUSSIONS** to brainstorm, inspire and spark up your creativity.
5. You may feel a **LACK OF DIRECTION** and be struggling to set goals and to prioritise your actions.
6. **LACK OF PLANNING** will see your time at home just evaporate in a mist of half-finished tasks, a mountain of 'pending' files and feelings of frustration and guilt at your lack of progress.
7. **YOUR ENVIRONMENT** may not be conducive to working effectively – noisy, no clear working space, poor internet connection etc.

8. **DISTRACTIONS** – partners or kids also at home or friends and neighbours who just ‘pop in’ and stay for hours.
9. Too many other **DEMANDS ON YOUR TIME** – elderly relatives, demanding family, domestic chores and household emergencies.
10. **FEAR of Covid19** – Paralysis through worry and constant news updates. This is always worse when you are alone with no-one to share your thoughts and concerns.

**Here are some TOP TIPS for embracing working from home and the increased productivity it can bring.**

1. **Set up a dedicated working space** where you can work with minimal distractions. A view of the garden (if you have one) will help you to lift your eyes from the screen at regular intervals and just appreciate nature. A bird feeder is a fascinating thing to watch throughout the day and will encourage you to give your brain regular breaks.
2. **Make your surroundings conducive to working –** Keep a clear desk or table where you only have your computer/phone/pens and the document/project you are working on right now. We apparently look at papers on our desk a minimum of 15 times a day. – Even a glance is enough to register in our subconscious brain that we need to do something with it and that is a drain on our energy.

You may also want a candle, a small vase of flowers or crystals on your desk – a few things that make it a ‘feel-good’ place to be. This is my happy place to work



3. **Invest in a good set of headphones** so you can zone out of peripheral noise and play music to enhance your creativity and focus – readily available on YouTube.
4. **Invest in an A3 notepad** and a good set of coloured pencils or Sharpies. Use them for brain-storming your day/project/goals/actions/plans in a way that is visual and fun.



5. **Plan your day** at the end of your previous working day so you can get straight into action rather than wasting time trawling through emails/social media/ endless 'to do' lists etc.

6. **Set out clear goals and actions** every day to keep you focussed on what you want to achieve. Prioritise your goals and actions into categories of  
Urgent – top priority – work on first  
Important – next priority once the urgent tasks are completed.  
Pending – not vital right now but needs to be done when time allows.  
Delegate – someone else can take this on and complete it sooner  
Decisions – needs some thought and brainstorming before committing to.

7. **Set short deadlines/check in points** and give yourself a time slot to complete tasks. Turn off all distractions – phone/email/social media and work till you have finished. Then celebrate every small win in whatever way floats your boat. – walk the dog, meditate, listen to a Ted talk, phone a colleague/friend etc.

8. **Take regular breaks.** Research shows that working for 52 minutes and taking 17 minutes break will keep you energised and more focussed. The brain is tired of being always 'on' and needs frequent 'time out'.  
A 10-15minute walk down the garden or round the block, gives your brain time to process what you have been doing and to clear some space for what is coming next. Meditation will have a similar effect and 'Insight Timer' is a wonderful free App packed full of guided meditations, podcasts and relaxing music.



9. **Eat for success.** Plan your nutrition for the day in advance to stop you grabbing a fast fix which will most likely be Carbohydrate heavy and can leave you feeling tired and depleted.

Have chopped vegetables ready to have with a dip, healthy soups, colourful salads, fruit, nuts, seeds – foods that will feed your brain as well as your body.

(Minimise the sugary, fatty foods you have to hand) – if you are feeling stressed or de-motivated, those are the foods you will unconsciously reach for.



10. **Stay hydrated** – drink plenty of water at room temperature and herbal and green teas. The brain is 85% water and when we are working it can become depleted.



Research studies have found that when your brain depletes 1 percent of water, you're likely to have a 5 percent decrease in cognitive/brain function; and for some, this is a lot. Other symptoms of lack of water are fatigue and memory problems.

11. **Dress for 'work'**. Staying in your pyjamas won't be conducive to making that challenging phone call or taking part in live webinars where you can be seen. The brain associates pyjamas with rest and relaxation time and that can negatively impact on your confidence and motivation.

12. **Set boundaries with family and friends**. Let them know you are 'working' within set hours and not available for random chats and play. If you are looking after children whilst trying to work, this is of course much more challenging. Make sure they have plenty of interesting activities to get immersed in and work in short bursts off time with play breaks scheduled in. You can even set a timer up on an iPad or phone so they can see the minutes ticking away until they have your full attention.

13. **Work in blocks of time and energy** depending on your list of priorities

**SPIRIT – PURPOSE** – Take time to think about your 'WHY', your vision, your impact on the world.

**ACTIVATING – CREATIVE** - Group all your creative tasks together and set time aside to do them preferably first thing in the morning when your brain is fresh.

**INSPIRING – CONNECTION** - Similarly – group all your 'people' and sales and marketing tasks together – phone calls, webinars/online meetings, social media, online networking.

**CULTIVATING – TASKS** - Projects, deadline driven tasks, regular customer care, checking on your teams' progress and actions are in the energy of 'getting things done'.

**REFINING – ANALYTICAL** - Anything to do with research, analysis, detail, cash flow etc is the analytical energy and needs concentration and a lack of interruptions.

14. **Have regular contact with your colleagues and team.** Many teams are having daily calls to discuss the current situation, to talk about priorities and goals and to identify actions needing to be completed.

This is a great opportunity to answer any questions, allay any fears and give clear direction particularly to junior or new members of the team

15. **Have an accountability buddy** who you can also check in with on a daily basis to report back on actions and progress and discuss any issues or challenges. There is nothing like accountability to make you get things done.



16. **Plan in learning and development time –**

- Continue with current studies/accreditations
- Listen to webinars/podcasts/TED talks in your area of expertise
- Develop your skills in social media/creating videos/presenting
- Increase your online networking and set up calls with potential clients or people you can cross-refer.

Invest in your greatest asset – ‘YOU’. -some special offers for you [here](#).

**Celebrate all successes.** Working remotely means you don’t get the same ‘high five’ burst of energy when you gain a new client or reach a new milestone. Make sure these are recognised in the group calls and show your appreciation for the person/people involved.

Finally, build a schedule that works for you and that becomes a ‘habit’. In testing times of change, a new routine can be a source of strength and resilience.

Introducing practices that make you feel healthy and valued will go a long way to boosting your confidence and your ability to come through this testing time stronger and wiser.

A morning routine that has made a massive difference to me -

- Guided meditation
- 5 items recorded in my Gratitude Diary
- Journaling – brain dumping my thoughts
- Yoga and exercise routine
- Freshly squeezed vegetable/fruit juice

By the time I sit down at my desk, I am fired up and raring to go and I feel truly valued.

My routine is personal as yours will be – one size does not fit all.

So, what routines can you introduce right now to start your days firing on all cylinders and truly embrace the magic of ‘working from home’?

## Summary

Your thoughts become your actions – if you tell yourself you can’t work from home, the brain will accept that, and the outcome will be poor productivity at home.

So, embrace the many benefits and be grateful that the internet enables us to do so much more than our parents could even dream of at our age.

Enjoy the connectivity we can have with colleagues, clients and prospects and make the most of these times of real and lasting change.



Stay positive and resilient and invest in your greatest asset by introducing a robust self-care routine that makes you feel valued and energised.

Remember we are part of history in the making and in years to come, children will learn about how we survived and thrived through these challenging times.

You can go through it in fear and negativity. You can complain about things you can't do, the people you can't see or the material things you can't buy and in so doing, not only drain your own energy but also the energy of everyone you talk to.

Stress also depletes our immune system and God knows we need our immune systems to be stronger than ever right now.

So, start the day with gratitude for another day to live your life, to create and communicate and to evolve and grow.

We are being stretched in a way we have never been stretched before. We are tapping into hidden strengths we didn't know we possessed, and we will come out stronger and wiser as a result.

Stay safe and well x



**Sylvia Baldock**, Maximising Personal and Team Talent,  
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Professional Speaker & Presentation Skills Expert, Business/Personal Coach/Mentor,  
'Time to Think' Facilitator, Author and Best-selling International Co-Author,

Sylvia enables Business Leaders, Teams and Entrepreneurs to recognise the unique value they bring to the workplace and to lead with confidence and purpose. Sylvia pinpoints your natural strengths and challenges and works with you to ensure you are playing to those strengths 70-80% of your working time.

Sylvia has extensive experience working with Business leaders, CEO groups, Senior Managers, Senior Women, Entrepreneurs, Charities and Social Enterprises, SMEs, CIMA, AAT and NHS supply teams.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

Neuroscience Professional Development Certification  
Professional Speakers Association Professional Member  
Executive Coach (The Coaching Academy)  
'Time to Think' Facilitator/Coach  
Harmonizing Alignment Consultant  
Authentic Charisma Coach  
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