

Messages from Home

From Valetta: I spent my entire young adult life teaching kids swimming lessons. I think the lessons were fun but they rarely ended with copious amounts of unstructured playtime. Flash forward to a couple of weeks ago, a lot of years have passed and I now have two children of my own, and I still cringe at the idea of unstructured time. A week ago we had structured extracurricular activities every single day, and three on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for good measure.

Then on the ides of March it all changed. My minute to minute planned life was flattened. To be fair, I'm too old and too stubborn to totally abandon structure, so the kids still need to do math, reading, writing and exercise daily but that still leaves better than ten hours daily, unstructured. Are the kids using their time wisely? Will they master a new skill during this shutdown? Probably not. But maybe they'll be no worse off, for the downtime.

When life resumes, I have no doubt that the kids will magically transform back into themselves, ready to go, go, go. The question is will I have learned to let a bit of the plan go?



From Sandy: On Day 1 of my Covid-19 self-isolation, I began with cleaning and sterilizing, counting all my victuals and (being a bookkeeper) making a spreadsheet with menu suggestions, downloading a few exercise & meditation videos, and thought, YES! I'd love to take part in your free online 'Learn Japanese at Home'. Wow! This crisis is such an opportunity to get all one's ducks in a row!

What have I accomplished in 8 days?

- Well, I now know why my house stayed clean for so long; because i wasn't in it from 9-5!
- Keeping a spreadsheet has it's disadvantages: I now know how much I snack when I'm bored.
- The warm glow of my love affair with Netflix has a 'best before' date.... and it's beginning to smell in here!
- My once abundant carbohydrate stores are surprisingly low this week. (And I think I've gained between 5-50 pounds. Any connection between the two? Hmmmmm!)

But as well as practicing self-isolation, we must not forget about self-care. I'm careful to follow the experts advice with staying at home, coughing into my sleeve and the relentless washing of my hands. But as I live alone, the monotony of being within these 4

walls with only myself for company is quite trying. So, there are a few things that have been crucial to my sanity and survival. I go outside for fresh air every day; if the weather is bad, I don my snow gear and go trudge around my driveway. I limit my exposure to news coverage to twice daily; too much bad news can be negative. If I'm craving social interaction, I phone friends or family; my daughters and I are in 3 different cities but we've spent a number of wonderful evenings video chatting together -- as a family! And I also practice self-affirmation, reminding me to be kind to myself and others, that I am a strong, beautiful woman, and that this too shall pass like a kidney stone perhaps, but it will pass!

These are scary, unpredictable days. We must trust our Government and health officials, and we must follow their instructions and stay at home. But while at home, let's do our best to keep positive and remain calm.

Well, I've unruly ducks all over my house! So, I'll say Sayonara and leave you with the following quote from my favorite movie:

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us."



From Tracy: I hope everyone is staying safe at home during this uncertain time. For me, working from home has been an adjustment since my job includes working directly with the clients of Vesta Place and the people in our community. Even though our centre is closed to the public we are still offering support via phone and email. Please do not hesitate to reach out for help!



From Paula: Working from home is certainly different. My first task was to find a space that would be away from the general noise and distractions of the rest of the house, especially my teenage kids. This took a little work to clear a spot and make it comfortable and functional. Then I had to adjust to the new pace of work. Without programs taking place, client drop ins happening and numerous community meetings to attend, my schedule opened up. While some meetings are still taking place by phone or video, the majority have been cancelled or postponed. I am someone who usually keeps a pretty full schedule so this new pace has taken some getting used to.

I am learning to lower the bar. Output will be different in this new context. And that is OKAY. I will still respond to messages, attend some meetings, but I will also do other things. I will take time to read, prepare for new projects and programs, and learn new things. I will be able to get through things in less time as there will be fewer outside distractions. That may mean I take time on a

nice day to get outside and enjoy the sun. I will look to balance life as work and home life blend even more than ever. That means taking time every day to also spend time with my family even if it is during traditional work hours. We are all trying to adjust to new realities and uncertainties and I will do that best if I learn to lower that bar, and not expect a mirror of my work outside of my home. I might even like it enough to continue it when we return to the centre.



From Melissa: Hi everyone in your own physical distancing abode. Sending virtual hugs and positive vibes as we all try to figure out this daily life change. I'm at home with my two boys, so we're still working on the work-life balance and schedules for play time, school time, and work time. So far, we've tried some new recipes for meals and made lots of cookies and muffins. Just wanted to reach out and say you're all doing great, whatever your daily life entails. We're all figuring this out, stay safe, stay mentally and physically aware, take time to relax, or exercise, read a book, or play lego. Whatever you're doing to keep yourself occupied, reduce stress and work within this new framework is perfect.

Upcoming:

Wednesday April 1st - April Fool's Day. No matter what is posted on Facebook, the pandemic is not over. Stay home, stay safe.

Tuesday April 7th - World Health day. This year focusing on nurses and midwives, honouring the vital role that they play in providing health care around the world.

Sunday April 12th - Easter Sunday. If you have kids in your home you may want to remember chocolate eggs or regular eggs and food colouring with your next grocery order. Last minute runs to Walmart for eggs and bunnies will be frowned on this year.

Wednesday April 22nd - Earth day. This years theme is climate action, which is both an enormous challenge and a vast opportunity.

April 19-25th - National Volunteer Week. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers, your efforts mean so much to us!

The Final Word:

I would like to draw attention to the fantastic leadership of Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Newfoundland and Labrador's Chief Medical Officer and Dr. Theresa Tam Canada's Chief Public Health Officer. Please at this time heed their advice, stay home and stay safe. These women are wonderful examples of strong, intelligent women in leadership. They have been steadfast in their resolve and shown grace under pressure. I hope their leadership will be an inspiration to all future and current female leaders.