112. Working from Home

Some folks love working from home and some really struggle; they might need help in 'switching on/off' at the start and end of the day or they may be feeling alone and isolated because they are not with others in the office.

1) Switching on/off

I recently heard the question: am I working from home or living at work? It is essential to find a way of separating work-life from home-life… even if you love your job!

The idea of separating work from home is to create a psychological gap, a way of telling the brain 'work is done – this is home time' and vice versa. I have seen this described as an 'airlock', 'circuit break' or 'fire break'.

At the end of the working day, you could:
- Update your to-do list with things that are still outstanding. This helps put work to bed and means you don't need to remember it all overnight.
- Switch off laptop/devices. Hear the click of the closing laptop… and relax!
- Close the door to the work area.
- If working in a living area, put everything away (laptop/paperwork/work-phone into a box).
- Avoid getting sucked back into work because someone in your team (or your manager) is working different hours to you. Let others know your core hours (e.g. at the bottom of your emails). Or switch on the 'out of office' message on your email.
- Get changed. Or at the very least, change your shoes!

- Go for a quick drive (if that allows you to relax)! Some people go and simply sit in their car for a few minutes, listening to the radio.
- Exercise, step outside or stick your head out the window (unless you live on a moving train).
- I know one chap who would go out of his front door in the morning, walk round the house and re-enter the house via the back door. He would then go into his office. At the end of the day, he did the reverse!

What else do you do at the end (or start) of the working day to tell your brain that it is time to focus on something else?

2) Feeling engaged with others

For some, it is not so much the switching off, but the feeling of isolation from their colleagues. For these folks, it is the social aspect that they miss[i]. If this describes you, you are not alone!

Check out who else in the team would like to catch up. Have virtual coffee/lunchtime breaks. Rather than using task-oriented team-meetings as a place to see how others are doing, make a point of setting up socials. Some teams do online quizzes and other creative things to have fun. Remember that some folk in the team may not really want to play!

Find like-minded colleagues and catch up on a one-to-one basis. Stay in touch with those who feel the same way.