

Welcome Space

De-Cluttering & Organising; Bringing Order out of Chaos

Getting back to normal.

Even though it hasn't been a great summer weather-wise, it's been lovely living at a slightly slower pace, taking time to be with children, friends and family. The planned 'stay-cation' turned into a bit of a wash-out but it's over now, the children are back at school, business-people are returning calls again, the roads are horribly busy and, with a slight sigh of relief, we can get back to normal.

For those of us who work from home, that 'return to normal' can be a bit of a trick and requires not a little self-discipline! Our priorities change from putting family first and fitting work around that, to the opposite overnight! Doing this successfully involves some planning and I'd like to suggest a technique that I've been using every Monday morning for a while now and for me it really helps:



I get a cup of tea, two pieces of paper, a piece of toast, a pen and my diary (not necessarily in that order!) and, even though something inside me is shouting "if you don't get busy soon, you'll never get it all done before he/she/they get home!", I take the next 10 minutes to plan my attack.

I make two separate lists – one for 'work' and one for 'home' and I write down everything I intend or hope to do this week – from the ironing to writing this article. Against each item I put a letter:

- **U = Urgent** Has to happen this week and possibly sooner!
- **I = Important** Has to happen but not urgent . . . yet!
- **O = Optional** Not important but would be nice, if I can get to it.
- **D = Delegate** Could be delegated. The ironing? Cooking supper?
- **T = Treat** For motivation and reward. A walk, massage, chat with a friend.

Then (with my realistic head on) I estimate how long each thing will take and in my diary I identify available time. I have found that the secret is to put the Urgent and Important items in the diary first. This is especially true of the 'big stuff' (things I really don't want to do or find difficult) My brain is at its best in the mornings and I schedule writing this article for two hours on Tuesday morning. The pleasure I'll get when I tick it off the list is almost embarrassing!

With the big stuff scheduled, somehow my head feels less cluttered, the smaller stuff fits in remarkably simply and actually it's probably not the end of the world if some of the ironing doesn't get done.

My technique still takes some self-discipline. Wandering off to re-pot a house-plant that's calling to me (and they do!), when in fact I had scheduled some potentially paid work, just will not do and I know from experience that I'll miss out on that (embarrassingly rewarding) sense of achievement at the end of the day. So I'm using re-potting the plant as a 'treat' for when I have completed one of those 'Urgent' tasks. And you know there's something rather comforting and enjoyable about 'getting back to normal' especially when I am pretty sure that I'll actually get things done!

P.S. Although I thought this article had little to do with my 'real' business as a professional de-clutterer and organiser, I now realise this is about keeping my week de-cluttered – quite fitting really!