

Remote work doesn't work for me. Your quintessential Type A personality. I thrive in a structured environment where expectations are clearly defined, standards and best practices have been established, firm timelines set (I love a good deadline) and feedback flows freely. When I'm in a situation where one or all of these elements are missing, my OCD organizational side will activate and I will create it for myself and others.

These traits are what made me so successful at my first career in hospitality. They are what made my transition to the 9-5 and a new career in Human Resources an easy one. Similar to the hospitality industry, HR is balancing the needs of an individual or group with the resources of the company. In HR, there are best practices to follow and policies to enforce. I struggled to adjust when I first made the transition joining a company that put a preference on remote work. This concept was new to me. While since joining BLANKSLATE, I have always had the option to work remotely, I preferred going into our beautiful Gastown office every day. Even though most days I was by myself. It gives me a sense of purpose each morning. To be completely honest - I just don't like working from home!

Deep set learnings:

For as long as I can remember there has been a clear line between home and work for me. During childhood, my parents owned their own retail business and never brought work home with them. My parents believed nights and weekends are for basketball, dance, friends and family. No phones allowed at family dinners. My parents of the belief that kids shouldn't be doing school work outside of school hours. Completing my homework was rarely encouraged (I had the best parents!). My first career was in an industry where it's impossible to bring your work home. Once your shift is over in restaurants, that's it. No homework, no emails, no calls (unless you accidentally take the keg room keys home with you). The ideal that home is for rest and the office is for work has been drilled into me from a very early age.

A Government Mandate Change:

Flash forward to April 2020. Working from home, is government mandated (for those that can.) One month ago our hero and provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, asked British Columbians to work from home if possible and I happily obliged. Anything to help flatten the curve! But after 30 years of never working from home... I'm not going to lie, it's been an adjustment.

The first couple of weeks of remote work went fine. I read all the tips for how to work from home successfully. We got dressed, pretended we were not at home. Created clear working hours and task lists. I've also created an imaginary coworker to blame my frustrations on. (Cheryl is the worst!). But as I started to move through the stages of grief that so many of us have/currently are, my motivation took a steep decline. I had lost my purpose. It felt like I wasn't achieving anything by not leaving the house. I was resentful to myself for being so unproductive but at the same time maintaining a 'what's the point?' mentality. Wake up, shower, get dressed, drink my morning coffee while planning my day. It's a familiar ritual. One I've perfected over many years. But instead of walking out the door, I find myself stuck in my small downtown apartment sharing my living room office with my partner.

I'm sorry, I don't have all the answers for you when it comes to remote work. But I am slowly figuring out what will work for me. It took some self reflection, a few tears of frustration and a call with my amazingly understanding and compassionate CEO, Izzie Egan, to redefine what a structured environment will look like going forward. I didn't know what I was missing until Izzie said the magic words: "What if I give you some tasks to complete within a timeframe"? By giving me deadlines Izzie had created a new purpose for me. Something to work towards,

goals to achieve.

“Communicate, Communicate, Communicate”

If you're struggling to adjust to this new normal as I have, all I can say is communicate, communicate, communicate! We are all going through it, so now more than ever we need to lean on each other. Be honest with yourself, your team and your leader. You might not see what you need but someone else might be able to. Or at least lend an understanding and compassionate ear.