

## KEEP GOING DESPITE THE LOCKDOWN

### **Foundational Points**

If you are going to keep going during this #COVID19 period, while finding balance and staying productive, these are some very important things you must do.

- **Shift Your Mindset**

You must shift your mindset about everything: how you work, how you create, how you socialize, your health and safety and that of those around you. These times that we are in require a mindset shift because we have to focus on what is it that we can control versus what we cannot control. You need to move your mindset from an immovable mindset to a growth mindset. You have to move from a lockdown mindset to an open-minded mindset. An example of a fixed mindset is a rigid one. *'This is where I am; I'm not going anywhere. They've locked me in here. I can't do anything about it''* Move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. A growth mindset is all about *'What can I do with my time now? What is more productive for me during this time? How can I develop myself during this time? What does this time mean for me? What does it mean for my family? What does it mean for my relationships?'* And what are the features of a lockdown mindset? Fear. It is one that makes you search and share everything I can find about COVID19. It is what makes you fixate on the negative aspects of the pandemic. A lockdown mindset is what causes hoarding of food, medicine, toilet paper etc. But a growth mindset says *'What can I learn from this? How*

*can I make a schedule for myself on how I use my time?'. A growth mindset says, 'I recognize that everyone is doing their best and they are facing extremely complicated situations.' An open mindset says, 'You know what? I'm living in the now, I'm focused on what is happening in the now. I'm not waiting for anyone to come and make my life better. I am appreciative and grateful at this point in time and this is what I use my time to do'.*

- **Focus on What You Can Control vs What You Can't**

You must learn to focus on the things you can control e.g. your time, your attitude, your kindness, the amount of news you consume, how you eat; and place less focus on the things you can't control e.g. the lockdown, Government regulations, the spread of the virus, the actions of others, how long the pandemic will last or how much toilet paper is left in the store. If you can't control it, stop spending energy and mind space on it. Stop spending so much social media time propagating what you cannot control. Focus your energy and productivity on what it is that you can control and start to build meaning out of those things.

- **Unleash Your Inner Giant**

Unleashing your inner giant means taking stock of your strengths a.k.a. your superpowers and using them to serve yourself and others in this situation. By serving others with your strengths, you build resilience. How do you focus your mind to use your strengths to help others?

For example, if you're a great listener or people say you give good advice and have the gift of wisdom, perhaps you should be checking up on people who are alone in this time and being there for them.

## **FINDING THE BALANCE**

The first aspect of Finding the Balance is the things you do to **Keep Your Emotional and Physical Well-being in Check**. How can you do this?

- **Find Time to Be Calm.** It's crucial to find time to meditate, to reassure yourself, and to affirm those things that are right. This helps you focus on the things that are important to your well-being and to your productivity. You can do this through yoga, or by just having a quiet moment to yourself. This is a time to have a personal "audit" – being prayerful, being introspective, reflecting on life, family, and work; and how you can move forward. You cannot do that with noise. You can only do that in the calm of your soul. That's why it's important to find time to be calm, to meditate, and to affirm what is right for your life at this point.
- **Exercise! Work Out!** Some people say, "*exercise is not for me*". Exercise is for everybody. If you don't like lifting weights or 'gyiming', then dance. There are so many Instagram handles that are really just about dancing as exercise. If you click the hashtag dance on Instagram, I'm sure that you can find something. But by all means, physical activity is important because it gets you going. It helps your stamina and your mind. Take walks outside even though you may not necessarily be able to go so far because you're in a lockdown situation.

- **Ask for Help.** Wherever you find yourself, whatever position you find yourself, there must be someone that can help. There must be somebody that is within reach and if they necessarily cannot help, they might be a resource to somebody. A coach is always a good resource. A coach gets you from point A to point B. A mentor is always a good resource and usually, where they cannot help because they are not experts, then it's important to be able to ask them perhaps they can link you to others. But please, do not wallow in your own depression. Do not wallow in your own issue, no. Whatever it is that you need to do, you should be able to ask for help. Even the good book says ask, seek, knock – that is the acronym ASK – you cannot do too much of that. Especially if you're in a real dire situation emotionally, please reach out for help and ask.

The second aspect of Finding the Balance is **Staying Connected**. How do you do that?

- **Have Meaningful Conversations.** Don't waste time on unnecessary gist. In fact, avoid time wasters and avoid time wasting at this point in time. If you're going to gist, let it be meaningful and beneficial to you in some way.
- **Call Someone Who is Alone.** This is the time to reach out to somebody who is lonely, lives alone or someone who might have people around them, but be going through stuff. Try to identify five to ten people who you can call. Don't keep your strength and warmth to yourself; share it with others.

- **Grow as a Family Unit.** What games can you play as a family? Can you see a movie on TV together as a family? Can you come together as a family to talk? This is a time to bond as a family unit. It could be something that may have been an issue in the family, and this is a time to talk about it. If you don't have kids that are old enough to really have those discussions, then you can stick with games and other fun activities. This is the time to be alone with them and give yourself to them especially if they don't see enough of you.
- **Engage in E-Socializing.** If we are going to stay connected, then we have to learn to use virtual tools more. We have to learn to use Zoom and Google Hangout. Some people are having parties, having cocktail hour, joining dance clubs, all online. Don't put your social life on hold waiting for the end of social distancing. Hang out with your friends now. Have drinks with them, have tea with them, form communities.
- **Assess the Quality of Your Relationship.** Honestly, this is the time to cleanse your relationships. This is the time to take a second look at your relationships. Who is draining you? Who is adding to you? Is this the time to rearrange the time that you spend on certain relationships? [In this video](#), Bishop T. D. Jakes talks about being able to identify your comrades, your constituents and your confidants. And he describes each of these people in our lives. You won't have too many confidants – usually they're maybe two or three in your life. But then, know who your comrades are and who your constituents are. Also, don't throw networking away because you can't see people physically. This is a time

to identify your mentor, your allies and your sponsors. Those people that can speak for you where you cannot speak for yourself. Are you investing in those relationships? This is the time to identify your cheerleaders or who those need to be a cheerleader to, who you need to encourage and coach. This is a time to also seek out your coaches who can get you from point A to point B. These all require an open mind and a shift in mindset. It also requires reflection and prayer.

## **STAYING PRODUCTIVE**

The first aspect of staying productive is **Managing Yourself and Your Rhythm.**

This requires maturity as much as it requires discipline. How can you do that?

- **Plan, Commit, Execute.** It's important to plan if you want to get the best out of yourself. You cannot necessarily plan every single thing, but you can at least plan your work schedule. You can plan what you want to spend time on. The correct flow is Plan your to-do list, commit to those tasks, go ahead and execute them.
- **Seek and Clarify Expectations.** Seek and clarify expectations for your work and for those of you who are managing others, do the same for your teams – for those that work with you. This helps you avoid duplication; unnecessary pressure and firefighting. Everybody is clear from the get-go. Communicate the expectations as well – don't leave anybody guessing. Where you might even need to go back to the drawing board, by all means, do that! So that you can avoid any form of pressure and frustration.

- **Integrate Work and Life into Your Calendar.** Work means your daily work - what is it that you're doing for your income or how you are getting busy. Life means anything that is not necessarily work related – your family, your hobbies, your other job – some of us have portfolio careers. We are doing two things, three things at the same time. Integrate your work and your life; one should not suffer for the other. Also make sure to integrate into your calendar one thing that you look forward to doing daily. For me, I'm watching Game of Thrones, I never watched it, you know, and I look forward to it after such a long day of work. For some people, it's a book or that down time that they spend with their family or conversations with their friends. It may not be every day, maybe two or three times a week. But by all means, identify that one thing that you look forward to doing and put it in your calendar too. It is so important. Why? Because it gets you going. It gets you looking forward to something the next day. It gets you focused and looking forward to life!

The first aspect of staying productive is **Managing Others and Working Remotely**. How do you do this?

- **Stay Informed and Educated** – This means that you find trusted resources in these times. Don't give yourself over to social media where news is from all over the place. Find your trusted source and the official guidelines and stick to that. Otherwise, it could become very unbearable. I'm not saying to bury your head in the sand, but to be selective of what information you consume.

- **Set Up the Right Tools.** Now, you know that working from home requires a lot. It requires reliable internet, a laptop or desktop, power supply, , a dedicated workspace, communication tools like messaging and video conferencing apps, and a very effective work schedule. An effective work schedule is something that you know works. Put the things that are important in there. Beyond hardware and infrastructure, the right tools include building your competencies. Working remotely effectively requires the right communication skills, discipline and self-motivation. It requires self-control, determination, reliability and dependability. Build up on those skills now because we are in this for a while and honestly, you've got to learn those things. If you already have them, teach others.
- **Upgrade Yourself.** If you are going to stay productive, this is also the time to upgrade yourself. This could be learning a skill, a new language or taking a course. Find something that benefits you. There are different platforms online where you can learn, and where you can also teach. There are podcasts, webcasts or TED Talks that you can listen to on particular topics. Is this the time when you want to focus on Financial Management or Personal Finances? Is this the time when you want to focus on etiquette? Is this the time when you want to focus on crisis-proofing your career? Do you want to learn about a particular skill? Now is the time. A few platforms you can learn and teach on are [Udemy](#), [Coursera](#), [Classcentral](#) and [Duolingo](#) for languages.