

Can't You See I'm Working?

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By C. J. Hayden

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For many working parents, telecommuting or a home business may seem like the answer to your prayers. You want to have more time with your kids and greater flexibility, so you take the leap, install a second phone line, and set up a computer in the dining room.

But the first thing you may discover is that working from home includes many unexpected distractions. Children, your spouse, neighbors, and the family dog come and go. They make loud noises, ask for your help, or interrupt to ask a "quick question," always just long enough to break your concentration.

Your family and friends don't seem to understand that you're working. They ask you to run errands, expect you to handle chores, and want to chat on the phone. When you see the pile of laundry or stack of dishes sitting there waiting, you may be tempted to take time out from work to clean up a bit.

You'd like to keep your house livable and be available to the people you care about, but it's just too much for one person to manage. When can you get any work done?

The way out of this dilemma is to set clear boundaries on your space, time, and responsibilities. If your office has a door, try having "open-door" time and "closed-door" time. When your door is open, the kids can come say hello, ask questions, or tell you about their day. When the door is closed, it means "Do Not Disturb."

A good way to explain this to children is to tell them you need some private time, not just that you are busy. If your office doesn't have a door, you need one! Try to find another place in your home where you can create some private space for at least part of the day.

Setting regular working hours will help you manage your time better as well as give some guidelines to your family. Build your hours around the family activities that are important to you. If your kids get home at 2:00, for example, set up your work day from 8:30 to 2:00 and 4:00 to 6:00.

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Your schedule can change each week to allow for your children's activities, when necessary. Choose how many work hours per week makes sense for you, design a schedule, and post it on your office door. Highlight the open times, and let everyone know that's when you are available to them.

If your family expects you to run errands and handle chores during your work day, it may be time to hold a family meeting. Explain to your children (and remind your spouse) that it may look like mommy or daddy is playing on the computer or chatting on the phone, but this is his or her job, and it contributes to the family's income.

Start by listing all the jobs that need to be done for the household, and who does them now. Instead of assigning chores, try asking each family member to volunteer for something. If there are lots of tasks left over, be sure to ask if they really need to be done, or done as often. (Dusting, for example, may need to go by the wayside.) If you are doing chores during time you could be making money, consider

hiring someone else to clean your house, service the car, or drive the kids to after-school activities.

When one of your boundaries gets tested, learn to hold the line. If you give in even once, don't expect the boundary to hold up. Try making the closed door, posted schedule, or job roster the bad guy instead of yourself.

Instead of, "I'm too busy to talk right now -- you'll have to wait," say, "The door is closed now, would you please come back when it's open?" When friends phone during work time, ask them to call back after hours. And when someone doesn't do one of their chores, don't do it for them. Serving a meal on dirty dishes may seem extreme, but it will get the message across.

C.J. Hayden is the author of *Get Hired Now!* and *Get Clients Now!* Since 1992, she has helped thousands of professionals make a better living doing what they love. C.J. is a Master Certified Coach who leads workshops internationally - in person, on the phone, and on the web. Find out more about C.J. and get a free copy of "How to Find a Job in 28 Days or Less" at

Do Nothing!

By Hifzur Rehman

Do nothing! Yes I mean it. But only for five to seven minutes a day during working hours.

You are born to work and working is a fun activity for the successful people of the world. I am giving you the "do nothing" advice in order to keep you working and working at your full potential without being depressed or tired.

During the mid-day sit down on a comfortable chair in a very loose and relaxed position. Your whole body, from head to toe, should feel comfortable. Switch off the telephone and TV. Cut off yourself

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completely from the outside world for a few minutes. No talking, no listening, no reading, no thinking, and no eating. Close your eyes, breathe slowly and go into deep relaxation. Pretend as if you are a dead person who has nothing to do and nothing to worry about. Be a part of the silent world.

I want to tell you, without going into lengthy details, that this short "do nothing" break would have magical effects on your mind and body. This practice not only relaxes your inner and outer muscles but also gives you the vital energy sufficient enough to keep you working for another couple of hours!

No doubt, after working hard for hours and hours your mind and body need some rest. Instead of taking cups and cups of hot coffee or tea to keep yourself active, use this simple technique of relaxation to enhance your working capabilities substantially.

I myself take a short break from my busy schedule during the lunch hours and practice this "do nothing" technique to relax my mind and body. I really feel great afterwards. Try it!.

Hifzur Rehman is the editor of

, a website dedicated to the success and

happiness of mankind.

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