

Antidote for Zoom Fatigue

Video conferencing has become the norm and is the way we live these days. It's as if we're living in the Jetsons era (I'm dating myself). It's also draining and exhausting. People are increasingly experiencing burnout from endless video conferencing – a phenomenon coined as "Zoom Fatigue" and it is real. Today, Zoom is not just being used for work; it's also how people connect with friends; participate in group fitness; attend life events like weddings, graduations, and even funerals; enjoy social activities (Zoom Happy Hour, anyone?); and go to school. We need to bring back human connection and re-integrate personal care. Although I'm not an expert at this, I know first-hand how this improves my work capacity and I'm sharing a few of my learnings with you.

- Create a ritual to think, process and plan
- Take your pulse and break up your day
- Setup guideposts and step away

Create a ritual to think, process or plan

Zoom fatigue is a mental and physical challenge. Consider blocking time at the beginning of your day – before Zoom fatigue settles in – to think, process, and/or plan your day. Even if this is a 30-minute break – do it. Use the time to preview your day, identify 2-3 work tasks to complete that day. Or perhaps you need that time to focus entirely on a deliverable that needs your undivided attention and fresh eyes. Going into your day with a sense of direction will help the day run smoothly. Treat this time as a daily ritual to start your day grounded.

Take your pulse and break up your day

It's easy to fall into the pattern of scheduling or attending back-to-back meetings. Stop. This is a fast track to Zoom fatigue. Instead, break up your day. Make time – even if that means scheduling it – to figuratively take your pulse and recharge before the next meeting. Check within and see what you need and do that. If you need time alone, take it. If you need food, get it. If you need time with a real, live person, make it happen (safely, of course). If you hit a mental block, go outside in nature. Individuals who take personal breaks during the day are more likely to end the day feeling productive and alive.

Setup guideposts and step away

Now more than ever, your day should be different from your evening, and your weekday should be different from your weekend. Make time to nurture yourself, your friendships, or even your interests. Preparing and enjoying a family dinner may help slow your roll and focus on what matters most. Perhaps getting your hands in the dirt and grooming your garden is a beautiful way to fuel your soul and start your weekend. Perhaps a long hike or run with a neighbor or friend fills your bucket and warms your heart. Maybe picking up a hobby like knitting, woodworking or writing brings you peace of mind. Conceivably all these activities allow you to disconnect and provide mental and emotional relief. Remember by taking care of yourself, you have the clarity to take care of others.

Excessive zooming is draining. Zoom is also a remarkable tool that allows us to easily connect more so than ever before. It helps us keep working, keep laughing, keep sharing, keep learning, and keep smiling. So, although I still feel like I'm living an episode of the Jetsons – I'm grateful for this tool and how it has reminded me of the importance of human connection and self-care. Take care of yourself and keep Zooming!

-Erica



A passionate organizer of people and initiatives, Erica Smigielski brings over twenty years of experience in project leadership to financial software and SaaS companies who want to launch their next big idea. She leads large-scale, complex projects like product launches and company mergers and acquisitions as well as focused efforts to bring structure and process to fast-track businesses. Erica holds certifications as a Stanford Advanced Project Manager as well as a Certified Group Facilitator, making her a master orchestrator of strategic planning, as well as a skillful communicator who can expertly navigate complex group dynamics.