

## HOW LEADERS CAN CREATE VIRTUAL CULTURES WHERE TEAMS CAN BE THEIR BEST

Here in the UK, many of us have been working remotely for over six months and for some of our global colleagues, it's been even longer. Some of us are now in discussion about when is the right time to return to the office and in what capacity. One thing is certain: now that we have proven we can operate effectively remotely, home working is here to stay in some form.

Working remotely has meant finding new ways of leading and figuring out new ways to support our teams to be their best. Recently, my conversations with leaders have been about what they are doing to support themselves being their best self - in these times it is so important to remember that you cannot take care of others, if you don't first take care of yourself. So, to take care of our teams, leaders need to make time to prioritise their own physical and mental health. With this in mind, below are a selection of examples of how leaders can make time for self care that I have come across over the last few months. Please use, experiment and share, as this is a time, more than any other time where we all need to be our best, to keep healthy, build back the economy and thrive.

**Keep your commute.** Whilst many of us are enjoying not having the long commute, we are losing the demarcation and thinking time from work to the office and from the office home. Even when you are not going into the office, put your commute back in. Begin and end your day with a walk, cycle ride, or run. You will start your day more alert and finish it ready to think about your life outside work

**Monitor your energy.** Assess the days you find more difficult to get energised and motivated. Arrange a meeting or a conversation that you know will give you energy/inspire you/provide you with needed perspective for that day in advance so you have something to look forward to.

**Use the phone.** For those who are Zoomed out or have had enough of Teams, go back to the traditional phone. For some meetings, I have taken the opportunity to have a walk at the same time, which has the added benefits of fresh air and exercise. Be clear about desired outcomes: we have very naturally moved away from presentism towards outcomes and a focus on flexibility and productiveness. For leaders this means being extra clear on direction and objectives so not to waste team members energy and time.

**Take holiday.** I used to save my holiday to get on a plane, feel the sun, and experience a different culture. With different quarantine rules all over the world, a staycation is more likely this year.. Having just taken a week's holiday, I was sure to spend time away from the laptop, Zoom and meetings. Now, I feel rested and have come back with more energy and a different perspective to share.

In these difficult times, it is critical that we do what we can to take care of ourselves and each other. How have you been making space to care of yourself and your team? Do share your suggestions and any successes you've had, or lessons learned - we can all learn so much from each other