

# The Simple Life Revisited

by Caroline Evans

The trouble with working from home is that you are not forced to have a really good spring clean of your desk, as often as when you are shifted around an office. But, in a moment of enthusiasm as we began to move out of lockdown, I felt the urge to sort out all the stuff that had been piling up on my home office shelves.

Voila! I came across a list I'd read in 2014 entitled "How to have a simple life (as an entrepreneur)". I remembered thinking that everything mentioned was an extremely sensible instruction, but I also reflected that I had struggled to follow any one of them.

However, the pandemic months had changed this and as I pondered the list, I wanted to share my thoughts with you:

- Let go of the past – obviously, I've let go of old ways of working, i.e. commuting into London when I didn't really need to but felt I'd be forgotten or thought to be shirking if I didn't put in an appearance.
- Consume less – well, I've certainly learned to live/work without expensive coffees and fancy sandwiches, not to mention the odd restaurant lunch. And, if consuming covers non-edible purchases, I can safely say that I've spent less on clothes over the past 12 months!
- Say no when you mean it – I made two pandemic changes that helped me do this: I prioritised my mental health and 'me time', and I took on a part-time role at my local hospital. This gave me a reason to limit my corporate commitments (and allowed me to enjoy giving back to my community).
- Turn off the phone – my 'me time' is dog walking. My hounds require and deserve my complete attention, and a relaxed frame of mind.
- Let go of perfectionism – working from home required me to up my game considerably on the 'tech' front. My learning curve was choppy and I got used to apologising for getting into a muddle with Doodle poll/Zoom/Teams/Excel issues. I also took on my first 'proper' company secretarial role. Starting at the bottom and being a beginner has been both hugely challenging and rewarding.

Enjoying the simple life is so more important now than ever and so I'm going to add one more item to the list: "Don't procrastinate on the dull jobs". Had I tidied my desk sooner I'd have achieved 'The Simple Life' much earlier!

I feel I'm one of the lucky ones, the pandemic has certainly provided me with plenty of positives in terms of work opportunities and lifestyle enhancements. However, perhaps the list itself isn't as important as recognising that change can be good, you just have to embrace it!

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