

Normalising the new normal

Today I have a throbbing headache from sheer boredom, although I am swamped with work. The contradiction here is maybe the real reason behind the dullness. I am tired of working from home and I am seriously having trouble in normalising the 'new normal'.

For how long will I be doing office work plopped in some random corner of the house, the rooftop garden or the balcony? For how long will I have meetings in zoom, sitting in my living room?

I miss the office meetings, the bad shingaras, and the salted biscuits. Being able to work from anywhere from the home has lost its novelty for me. I want my office desk, that cumbersome revolving chair, my 'best boss' tea mug, my computer, my files, my meeting people at work, even the bad canteen lunches have never been this missed.

Working from home does have its drawbacks, there is no space for private lives,



at the end of the day I don't come back to my cosy bed because now the bed is my office desk. There is no after-office experience, I am working for the office almost every hour of the day, tweaking this, proofing that, arranging food shoots, doing meetings, answering phone calls in the middle of my showers. There is no line between private lives and professional ones. It is taking toll on my psychological health.

Nothing seems interesting, I have cooked, baked, potted plants, cleaned out the refrigerator thrice in five months, cleaned the closet, changed the setting of my rooms and now I am all ready to go back to work, to cafes, to movies, to restaurants, to hold a newspaper in my hand.

I mean we are in the last trimester of the year, and let's be serious, we did adapt with the stressful pandemic; along with the job cut/money loss/health/anxieties that

came with it. Our businesses, our stores, restaurants, salons are all facing the lowest possible turnover throughout the year; then there is the uncertainty of the times— like whether or not I will get that dreaded call from HR of being fired or tackling salary cuts.

The past few months have shown me all the things I can live without and very recently showed me the things I cannot do without. I need normalcy in my routine by adapting with the dos and don'ts of the virus.

I have so much to do before the year ends; tying loose ends mainly. But I went around asking friends about how they feel about normalising the new normal? Do they like working from home? Does it affect their private space? How do they see the future?

I am just jotting down their answers for you all to get an idea of what people are thinking generally.

Paula Aziz, Co-founder Gurukul

I don't like working from home for a long period of time. It is better for me to do office as I can concentrate more. As my office is my own business space that I share with my husband, it couldn't possibly affect my personal space. I see the future to be normal again in about six months. Perhaps herd immunity is the only way to go about it. What if vaccines don't work, what if you can get it for a second time, what then? But you can't possibly stay home forever.

Munem Wasif, Photographer

I like working from home. But as a visual artist, my work is very site specific. I need to go to a specific location, gather raw material, either to take a photograph or an interview or collect some objects. Without having that real collection, it's very difficult to sit at home and imagine the world outside. I need to experience the world in a tactile manner.

Although we also have to accept the new

reality and see what we can do from home. I have started to read books that I have wanted for a long time. And also connect with a lot of colleagues abroad, in different time zones. I guess the pandemic pushes you to look inside, introspect, ask difficult questions about nature and ecology, the world we live in.

I think yes, just being home all time, it affects your physical and psychological space. My son has to attend online school classes. We also have to find our own spaces to concentrate. Otherwise everything overlaps and creates a mess. But a lot of us don't have that privilege.

I don't know if it depends on us as individuals? But we have found new ways to interact, adapt and communicate. The future looks uncertain, I guess we all have to be patient and respect the course of nature. The pandemic is actually going to cause depression in a lot of people. And financial stress.

Shamsun Nahar Tarek, CEO, Primocom
I personally believe that this global pandemic has shown us our adaptability in the face of adversity. Working from home started out as a precautionary measure we had to take to ensure our safety while making sure the work did not stop. Getting to spend a lot more time with my family, who themselves are working from home, was certainly an amazing feeling. However, working from home transformed the regular work hours into 16-hour shifts. The perception seems to be that because an agency employee is working from home, they are at work for 24-hours. The weekends have turned into days where clients call in to check for work updates. Though it is a bit difficult, but we have to accept and cope with this situation.

SEE PAGE 5

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Don't overreact to someone's advances. Family members can cause issues. Don't blow situations out of proportion. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Keep an open mind. Don't let loved ones make unreasonable demands. Keep up with work this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Trust the advices you are given. Spend time with friends you enjoy. Fulfil all your responsibilities promptly. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Don't let anyone take advantage of your talents. Be careful with any equipment. Get involved in creative groups. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Conflict may arise between your partner. Communication will be a good source for knowledge. Don't waste time daydreaming. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Your boss can cause trouble. Do your work diligently. Family get-togethers will be interesting. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Take time to rearrange your home. Sit down with someone for advice. Direct your energy wisely this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Take up a healthy hobby. Children may not be too accepting. Try not to be so demonstrative. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Your partner will appreciate your efforts. Work fairly in a team. This week will be good for business. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Do something entertaining. Spend time with children this week. Your leadership qualities will come in handy. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Control your emotions with your partner. Don't spend too much. New romantic relationships can develop through group activity. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Take part in creative projects. Find opportunities to learn valuable skills. Have a heart-to-heart with a trusted friend. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.