
THRIVING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS

Virtual and Remote Work and Life
How to Stay Connected, Positive, and Productive



BELLA ST JOHN

Thriving During The Coronavirus

Virtual and Remote Work and Life
How to Stay Connected, Positive, and
Productive

By

Ms (Leigh) Bella St John

www.BellaStJohn.com

Why I wrote this book:

It feels like my entire life has been preparing me for this time in history, and to use my experiences to be of service.

For many, many years I have been living the life of a 'Luxurious Nomad' (www.LuxuriousNomad.com), travelling the world, remotely working and managing my teams of 'Elves' (virtual workers), staying in touch virtually – so it's now just a matter of sharing that knowledge with others...

But it is so much more...

Going 'Old School'

I was largely raised by my great-grandmother - an amazing woman born just after the end of the 1800s!

This was a woman who lived through both world wars, and for whom the rationing mentality was a way of life.

I grew up learning how to chip pieces of soap with a knife and soak them to make detergent; how to wash clothes on a wash-board, putting them through a wringer and hanging them on a line with wooden pegs; how to make and bake everything from scratch; how

to repair things; how to amuse myself with very little...

This book is a combination of everything I have learned in the hope that the experiences of my rather unusual and eclectic life will be of benefit to at least a small handful of people as we learn to navigate what may be a brand new way of living... at least for now...

I have also left blank spaces throughout the book. If you have the print version or choose to print out the electronic version, you might like to make notes in those areas.

My priority was to get this book done and out as soon as I could,

and as such I have not gone too in-depth into any one subject.

If you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information, please feel free to reach out to admin@BellaStJohn.com

This is an unprecedented time in history when we all need to pull together.

If I can help, I will.

Bella

PS: Please feel free to distribute this book to anyone you feel may be able to put it to good use.

Additional Resources

I will also be holding some virtual events, free training, Q&As, etc, and you can find information on those at:

www.BellaStJohn.com/events

I have made several of my books available as a free download. You can find those here:

www.BellaStJohn.com/books

...and I am building out a new website for more creative ideas and tips, including how to make delicious meals with very little – and even crazy substitutions ideas for recipes such as how to use

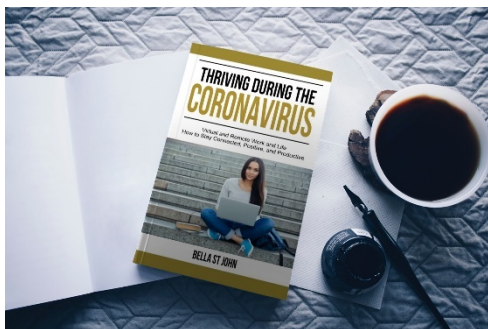
fizzy drink in place of eggs when baking - or how to make air-dry clay with only PVA glue and flour!

You can find this new site at:

www.ElegantlyCreative.com

(and please bear in mind that it is a new work in progress that will have content added over the coming weeks)

For either/both of those sites, if you would like me to let you know when I post something new, simply add your email at the top of the page on the website(s).



Contents

Why I wrote this book:.....	3
Going ‘Old School’.....	4
Additional Resources	7
Virtual and Remote “Work”	16
Getting Everything Set Up	18
Do You Need a VPN?	20
What are Your Company’s Telecommuting Policies?	24
How to Check Your Internet Speed	26
Gathering All Your Log In Information	28
Connecting to Your Work Printer/Home Printer.....	30
How to Video Chat	32
Video Conference Basics.....	34
Using Your Webcam.....	35

Test equipment.....	38
Your Workspace	39
Your ‘office’	41
Ergonomics and Healthy Backs	43
Security.....	44
Background Image.....	46
Lighting	48
Background Noise	50
Distractions	52
Virtual Meetings	54
How to Host Virtual Meetings.....	56
Video Meeting Tips	59
Screensharing.....	64
Virtually Managing People and Teams	65
Trust Your People	67
Applying ‘Four Part Harmony’	69

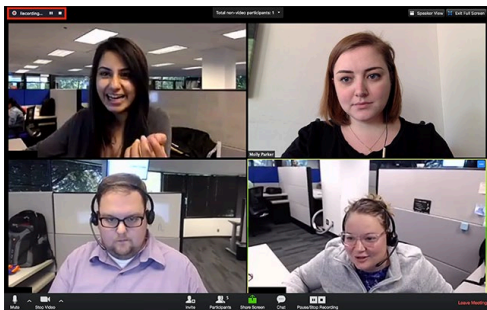
Eliminating Single-Points of Failure	71
Project Management Tools	73
Be Mindful of Text and Email Overload.....	75
Be a Strong, Positive Leader	79
Reference List.....	82
Run Truly Great Virtual Meetings .	84
Include On-Site and Off-Site People in Meetings	87
Daily virtual ‘stand ups’	88
Weekly one-on-ones	89
Work Out Loud.....	90
Hanlon’s Razor	92
Personal styles	94
Encourage Informal Conversations with Managers.....	97
Virtual Water-Cooler Chats	99
Work Buddy	100

Host Regular Bonding Activities	101
Resolve Conflict Face-To-Face.....	103
Regular Evaluations and Self Evaluations	105
Virtual and Remote “Life”	109
Be Prepared	111
Basic Kitchen Food Items.....	112
Tool Kit.....	122
How to Stay Connected	124
Video Tips.....	126
Video Apps	129
Staying Connected to Family, Friends, and Community.....	131
Watch Movies Together Virtually	132
Wine-o-clock	133
Virtual Karaoke.....	134
Virtual Date Night	135
Virtual Board Games.....	137

Virtual Charades.....	139
Share a Journal.....	140
Virtual Fancy Dress Party	141
Virtual Book Club	143
How to Stay Positive.....	147
Mindset.....	149
Where to Find Positive News Stories	151
Care for others.....	153
#ViralKindness.....	154
Be Mindful of What You Watch....	155
Positive Language.....	156
Learn something new	157
Take an Online Course	158
Experience the World Virtually	159
Go On a Virtual Vacation	161
Virtually Visit Museums and Galleries.....	163

Health and Fitness	165
14 Day Challenge	167
Be Creative and Make Things	174
How to Stay Productive	179
Life Goes On	182
Focus on Your Life Goals	184
Do It Now	184
Write in Your Gratitude Journal Each Day	186
Final Note	190

Virtual and Remote “Work”



[Image source: Zoom.us]

Let's start with the business-side of life.

This section of the book deals with how to effectively work remotely; how to manage people

virtually; and how to keep your teams productive, and positive.

As I mentioned earlier, if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information, please feel free to reach out to admin@BellaStJohn.com.

I will also be holding some virtual events, free training, Q&As, etc, and you can find information on those at:

www.BellaStJohn.com/events

Getting Everything Set Up

First, let's look at this from a **positive perspective**. While this is a challenging time, there are many benefits of working from home.

One such benefit is not having to commute. I have a friend who travels over an hour each way to and from work - well, they did before this current situation. Now they are able to use that commute time to be more productive at home and in their work.

As we dive into the following logistics of working remotely and

virtually from home, please
always remember that **there are
silver linings in everything** - all
we need to do is become
accustomed to searching for
them.

Do You Need a VPN?



Let's get you connected...

A VPN, or **Virtual Private Network**, is a way to provide a

higher level of security for your internet connection.

PC Mag put it best: “Simply put, a VPN creates a virtual encrypted tunnel between you and a remote server operated by a VPN service. All your internet traffic is routed through this tunnel, so your data is secure from prying eyes. Best of all, your computer appears to have the IP address of the VPN server, masking your identity and location.

To understand the value of a VPN, it helps to think of some specific scenarios in which a VPN might be used. Consider the public Wi-Fi network, perhaps at a coffee shop or airport. Normally, you might

connect without a second thought. But do you know who might be watching the traffic on that network? Can you even be sure the Wi-Fi network is legit, or might it be operated by a thief who's after your personal data? Think about the passwords, banking data, credit card numbers, and just plain private information that you transmit every time you go online.”

Your first task here is to inquire whether your company has a VPN, and if so, how you log in to it.

Also, discover whether you are able to log into your company's files from home, and if so, and if it is appropriate for you to have

access, what you need in order to access those files.

If you are self-employed, you might like to invest in a VPN. The one I personally use, and have done for several years, is 'Express VPN'.

What are Your Company's Telecommuting Policies?

This one is particularly of interest for those working in sensitive sectors such as banking.

It is important to find out your company's policies on **whether you are permitted to print anything at home** – and if you do, how you store that information.

You also need to ask **whether you are permitted to save to local drives**, or if everything needs to be saved to the company server.

These may seem like trivial items, but imagine someone needs access to a file. If your equipment

is in the office, that's one thing – but they can't exactly come to your home to gain access.

Be mindful of everything you do, where it is saved, whether it is secure, who might need access...

How to Check Your Internet Speed



Travelling around the world, I have discovered that hotels are notorious for their often abysmal internet speeds.

It is quite common that I am able to get a faster and more reliable signal by **using my cell phone as a hotspot**.

A hotspot is simply using your phone in place of a modem to connect to the internet.

Use a tool such as [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net) to test your internet access and also that of your phone's internet access. If you find your phone is faster (and if you have an unlimited plan), you might decide to use your phone as a hotspot when speed and reliability are particularly important, or when you are attending a video meeting where having a high bandwidth is a consideration.

Gathering All Your Log In Information



Think through a typical day - think of all the different sites into which you need to log in.

We have passwords for this and that...

It is essential that for work you double-check that you have **all the login information you will need to access all data and platforms.**

Remember, a lot of these passwords and access codes are stored on your system, so if you are not taking your work computer with you, you may not be able to log in if you do not take note of the various passwords – and remember to also keep any such records safe, especially when you will be away from the relative security of your office.

Connecting to Your Work Printer/Home Printer



No doubt you will need to print while you are working remotely.

If you are bringing your work laptop home, **ensure that you are able to connect it to your home**

printer (provided this is in line with your company's policies).

Additionally, whether you are working on your home or work laptop, you might need to **connect to your office printer** in order to print out materials for those who are still working in the building.

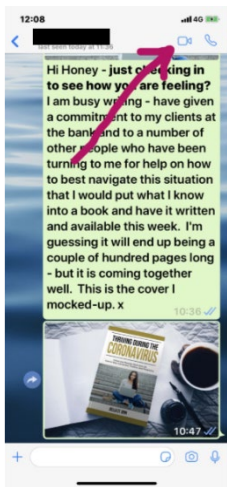
Check with your IT department whether this is a feature that is available, and if so, how you access it.

How to Video Chat

Most of us have used features such as 'Facetime', and there are ample applications with similar video chat options.

Discover which applications are favoured by your company - or if you are self-employed, decide which will be your go-to apps - and make sure they are installed onto your various devices, set up, and fully functional.

In essence, whichever app you use, there will be an icon that looks like a camera or similar that will enable you to make a video call. Just scroll through your contacts in any app such as



Whatsapp, and you will see an icon such as this on. Click on it and it will allow you to video chat with that person.

Please note, this only works if the other person has also downloaded that particular app.

Video Conference Basics

This tool is VITAL for remote teams and workers to stay in touch.

Again, the choice of applications and platforms is seemingly endless. My personal favourite is 'Zoom', but there are plenty from which to choose.

Discover which video conferencing system your company prefers and again, **make sure you have downloaded anything necessary to your system, and that you have any access data required to utilise the platform.**

Using Your Webcam



Almost all laptops come with a built-in webcam and microphone, and these are perfectly acceptable. However, when you are going to be using this as your only means of people seeing you, it is not always the best option.

For instance, I have a Dell laptop and the webcam is located at the bottom of the screen, near the keyboard. This angle would give people a lovely view up my nose, but not exactly the best for communicating.

My personal option is the Logitech Brio webcam that has a built-in microphone. It sits on top of the screen and so provides a much more natural angle.

Whichever webcam you choose, before your first video chat or video conference, ensure you know how to turn the camera on (it doesn't automatically turn on with every application).

As I mentioned at the outset, I am not going into huge detail here with the troubleshooting of such things as webcams – there are so many different types and so many different applications, that would be a book in itself – but rather to point you in the right direction. If you get stuck, you can always email me and I will do my best to help.

Test equipment

Once you have everything set up and you have all your log in details, **it is important you test your equipment and your ability to access all systems.**

The last thing you want is to be working away at home and discover you forgot to get the log in details for your company's group virtual meeting that is about to start... or that you logged in but cannot get your webcam or audio to work... (this last one happens to people a LOT!)

Your Workspace

When I first started working virtually a gazillion years ago, there was still a belief that in order to be productive, one needed to have a designated 'office' - and that still applies in some instances.

For me, I found I was just as productive working beside a waterfall as I was at a desk, provided I had:

- a strong internet signal to my phone (that I use as a hotspot),
- that I had somewhere comfortable to sit,

- any required hardware such as headset for phone calls etc,
- and relative privacy.

Your 'office'



Many people are currently in home-based lock-down, and as such the waterfall option is not available.

It is important, however, that you find a suitable 'office' from which to work.

It may be a spare room; it may be the dining room table; it may be a comfy sofa...

Wherever you choose, determine whether this needs to be your dedicated space (meaning no one else has access to it), or whether like me you are able to close up and pack up at the end of your work session, put everything away and make the space again a communal area.

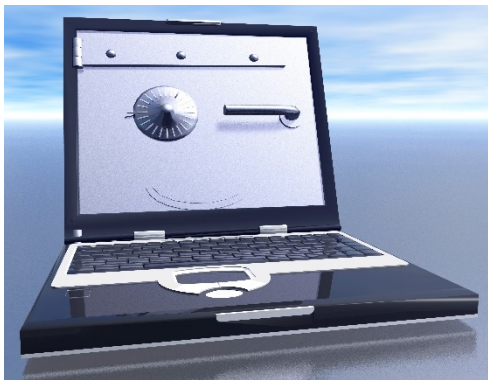
Ergonomics and Healthy Backs

It is easy when away from a traditional office to forego ergonomics (furniture designed to effectively support the human form), however do this at your peril.

Not everyone has an ergonomic chair at their disposal, but we all have the availability to do regular stretching; to move at frequent intervals...

Just because we are working from home, doesn't mean our backs need to suffer!

Security



Whether working in a coffee shop or from home, security is an important aspect of remote work.

We spoke earlier about VPNs to keep your data safer, but what about people seeing your screen –

or perhaps if you have young children, 'little fingers' who press keys they shouldn't?

Make it a policy of knowing how to quick lock your screen, putting your computer to sleep:

Press Windows Key + L on a Windows device, or Control + Command + Q on a Mac, to quickly lock your screen.

When you return, you'll have to do a quick sign-in, and everything should be right where you left it.

Background Image

When setting up your webcam, pay attention to what will essentially be your background image.

- What is behind you?
- Is it suitable for a business video call?

My health and mobility challenges mean that I often have to work from bed – so when I do, in ‘Zoom’ I use their ‘virtual background’ feature.

This is a screenshot from one video conference – apart from the occasional flickering edge, no one would know whether I was in a

studio, beside a beach, or, as was the case this day, working from bed:



Lighting

It might seem trivial, but lighting plays a large part in how well you are seen when it comes to video meetings – and not just so people can see your pretty face!

High quality video relies on more than just the camera's resolution. **Adequate lighting eliminates any potential noise or graininess in the image.**

Although I have a full lighting setup, my go-to piece of kit is a small clip-on USB-powered round light that I picked up on Amazon for around \$15.



It simply clips to your laptop or smart phone screen and provides excellent lighting.

Background Noise

As for noise. whether on the phone or connecting via video, few things are more annoying than background noise.

Also, with many video conference apps, in a group call situation the smart-app will prioritise the person with the most dynamic noise and show them to the rest of the group (thinking they are the one presenting the most valuable information) – meaning that even though your manager may be speaking, the app is showing your face if you have distracting background noise (very embarrassing).

Sometimes background noise is unavoidable (especially while we are all in lockdown and many have young children) and in those instances, **use the mute function – but remember to un-mute when you want to add to the discussion.**

Distractions

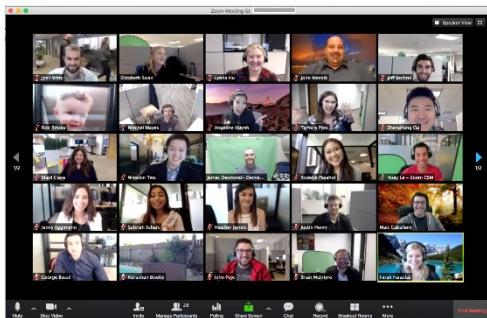
Aside from noise, distractions can come in all forms – and for those with families who are in lock-down with you, distractions may come on two legs or even four.

It is important to involve the whole family in your new remote work life, letting them know when it is ok to bother you, and when it is not.

If possible, when you are on video calls or conferences, close the door – even taping a note on the outside letting your family know that you are on a call and will be available later.

Remember, you may be at home,
but you are still working.

Virtual Meetings



Just because we are physically isolated from each other, doesn't mean we cannot 'see' one another and still meet effectively.

In this section, we will look at how to host virtual meetings and how

to make sure they are just as successful, if not more so, than traditional in-person meetings.

How to Host Virtual Meetings

As with in-person meetings, it is important to adhere to effective meeting protocol.

1. Decide if you really need the meeting
2. Set an agenda
3. Be mindful when choosing a day and time for the meeting
4. Be mindful when choosing attendees
5. Start on time
6. Stick to the agenda
7. Finish on time

As with in-person meetings when advising attendees where the meeting will be held, with virtual meetings there is still a location, only in this instance it is a URL. This is what the link for a video conference in Zoom looks like:

`https://zoom.us/j/xxxxxxxxx`

(where the x represents the specific online meeting room)

Once you schedule your online conference, then the process is the same as an in-person meeting of informing people and then hosting the meeting the same as you would if everyone was in the same room with you.

There is one other element you may wish to consider with video meetings, and that is **the option of recording**.

This may be useful if there are any participants who cannot make it on the day, or if you or your team wish to go back and review the meeting at a later date.

Video Meeting Tips

Here are just a few tips to help those who are new to video-conferencing to feel more empowered and comfortable with the technology.

- If the video meeting has both on-site and off-site attendees, suggest each person logs in from a separate computer rather than a group huddled around one machine
- Find a space in your environment that has as neutral a background as

possible and is relatively quiet

- Test your audio and your video
- Be mindful that we do not have all the physical cues that we would in a normal meeting and so **when one person finishes speaking, they hand back to the facilitator/whoever is running the meeting** - this can be as simple as answering a question, and at the end simply saying the name of the meeting host to indicate you have finished your reply

- Set up a light/lamp near where you will be sitting so your face is well lit
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking
- Stay focused on the meeting (no checking of emails or texts - this is actually very distracting for everyone else as well because unlike on a phone call, they can see you are not paying attention)
- When you are speaking, **look at your laptop's camera, not the screen** - it helps people feel you are engaged

- Share meeting agenda and any relevant documents and/or links in advance
- **Suggest that people use the 'chat' or 'hand-raise' facility** to advise if they have a question rather than simply begin speaking - and the meeting host to keep an eye on this to accommodate questions accordingly
- Rotate duties - for instance, if one team is regularly meeting, suggest rotating who is hosting the meeting to give everyone the development opportunity and keep all engaged

- ...and as with all meetings,
start and end on time to
respect everyone
concerned

Screensharing

Screensharing in a video meeting is exactly what it says it is – you are sharing what you are seeing on your screen with the others in the meeting.

This is an important and highly valuable feature of many video conference platforms such as my favourite, Zoom, and one with which you need to familiarise yourself.

As each application is different, consider setting up a test meeting with a colleague to do a trial run sharing your screen and running through a mock presentation.

Virtually Managing People and Teams

When planning this book, I was amazed to hear comments that suggested just because people were not in line of sight, that they would not be working to their utmost.

In my experience, the majority of people work even harder and longer when they are working from home as there is often a sense of needing to prove they are doing a great job when it is not possible to *see* them doing a great job.

Trust Your People

As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, I was disappointed to hear a some managers saying that if they couldn't personally see their people working, they didn't trust that those people would put in the same effort at home that they did at work.

It is the job of managers to step up and be leaders – to put into place the ‘Four Part Harmony’ elements mentioned earlier, to ensure everyone has clear guidelines of what is required and by when; and then to trust your people to do their job the

**best way they know how in these
new and challenging times.**

Give them guidelines, stay in
touch, and trust them.

"The best way to find out if
you can trust somebody is to
trust them."

Ernest Hemingway

Applying 'Four Part Harmony'

Some time ago, I came to a realisation that at its simplest, there four elements that, when applied, eliminate the vast majority of problems in management and delegation *before* they arise.

We names these four elements, the 'Four Part Harmony', because when in place, the result is smooth and harmonic.

Essentially, they are clarity of vision, clarity of timelines, scheduled and structured feedback, and clarity of success measures.

1. Be crystal-clear on the objective, the what, the why, the scope
2. Understand all timelines - both overall completion date and any milestone dates along the way
3. Have both structured (as in agendas etc) and scheduled (as in calendar) feedback loops
4. What does success look and feel like

Eliminating Single-Points of Failure

When coaching those in leadership and management, I often ask them, “what happens if so-and-so is abducted by aliens this afternoon?”

While I am not actually referring to aliens as such (although with the world as crazy as it is, who knows!), but I am suggesting that **anything can happen to anyone at any time, and we need to be ready.**

When managing your people virtually and remotely, it is important to eliminate any single-

points of failure, or in other words, make sure that if any one person is abducted by aliens, the whole process doesn't stop.

This is also important when delegating who works from home and when, staggering working hours, letting people know when they are required to be on-call, and making sure there is always someone available to solve any issue within a timely manner.

Project Management Tools

Whether you use sophisticated platforms, or something as basic as shared Google documents, when working remotely **it is vital that your overall project management is as visible as possible to as many as possible.**

There was a longitudinal ‘worker motivation’ study done some time ago from the 1950s to the 1990s, and although I can no longer find the primary source, I do recall that while so many things changed in the workplace over those decades, the one thing that did not change – and stayed number one almost

without exception from one to the next:

**#1 worker motivator was
“feeling in on things”**

Make sure your project management tools not only do their job of helping you navigate successful outcomes, but also provide a means of making progress visible so people ‘feel in’ on that progress.

Be Mindful of Text and Email Overload

Personally, I find I am much more productive if I check my emails in blocks of time, rather than constantly switching to review them on the fly.

As such, I have an understanding with my friends and clients alike - if they email me anything that is extremely urgent, they send me a text to tell me to look at my emails.

We are also aware of each other's time zones and work hours.

I have some people I know leave their phone off overnight so it's

perfectly fine to send them a text during those hours, provided it is something positive that will give them a lovely start to their day - others do not switch off their phones, so it is important to refrain from texting until they have already greeted the world in the morning.

Be mindful that just because you feel like chatting, this may or may not be a good time for the other person.

Also, I had one young intern a few years ago who sent me a text, I read it, was about to reply, when my phone rang. While I was on what ended up being a rather long call, my phone started to blow up

with text messages from the intern saying things along the lines of, 'if I didn't want to communicate with her, I didn't need to give her the silent treatment' and 'how was she supposed to learn if I won't reply to her'...

My call lasted a total of around 12 minutes and in that time I received around 7 such texts from the intern.

Please be aware that just because someone doesn't get back to you right away, it might have nothing to do with you!

Be mindful that, especially at this time, we are all bombarded by text

and email - and phone - much more than normal.

Give people space - and while staying in touch is important, give consideration to whether your text really is all that important.

Be a Strong, Positive Leader

- Each morning, check the latest info and safety suggestions from the official CDC websites etc (not news outlets) to ensure you are giving your people the most up-to-date information to help keep everyone motivated and safe
- Be a positive leader and role model - your people look to you to provide guidance and if you are confident and positive, that has a positive and confident ripple effect

- Focus on 'solutions' - decide that this is a 'problem-free-zone' - but rather simply situations that require solutions
- Be direct and decisive in your approach, your manner, your language, and its delivery - demonstrate by your leadership by affirmative action
- Reinforce the positives of 2m/7ft social distancing - encourage compliance - and if you have people still working on-site, ensure in meetings that there is an empty seat between individuals

- Acknowledge people's fears, and reply with positive hope, belief, and faith in a bright and healthy future at the other end of this
- Find at least one positive news story each day in relation to the virus to share with your team

...and stay focused on your work and doing the very best job you can - whether working from home or in the office. Your company and your fellow team members need the very best, positive, productive version of you!

Reference List

Here is a reference list that might come in handy:

- Main CDC (Center for Disease Control) Coronavirus Website
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- CDC Recommendations on what to do if you are sick
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- World Health organization Advice for the Public
<https://www.who.int/emc>

[rgencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public](#)

- Harvard Coronavirus Resource Center
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/coronavirus-resource-center>
- US Department of Education Coronavirus Updates
<https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>
- US Department of Labor Coronavirus Updates
<https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>

Run Truly Great Virtual Meetings



We all know how to run a basic meeting – tell people when and

where to turn up, talk, finish, action items, leave.

With this new remote and virtual world, it's important to step up our game when it comes to running truly great virtual meetings!

Consider if any of the following are appropriate for any of your virtual meetings:

- Lively background music while people are arriving
- Asking everyone to bring their lunch and munch while you work
- Since people are at home, asking them to wear their

most outlandish or outrageously coloured top

- The World Economic Forum had a great idea, “Asking meeting participants to give a quick ‘virtual tour’ of their environment, in which they detail any possible interruptions - from housemates, children, pets or even local traffic, for example - can provide useful context and can encourage colleagues to be sensitive to each others’ situations and constraints.”

Include On-Site and Off-Site People in Meetings

Some workplaces are deemed 'essential' and so still have some of their staff working on-site.

It is vital that *all* employees stay in touch, so consider when having meetings to include both those working from home and those working on-site.

Also, for those on-site, remember to access the video meetings from different laptops in different rooms - not just for social distancing, but for technology reasons discussed earlier.

Daily virtual 'stand ups'



Consider having daily quick 'stand up' video meetings with your team as a quick check-in to see who is doing what, if everyone has what they need, and to simply make everyone feel connected.

Weekly one-on-ones

During times of stress and massive change, as we are seeing at present, **it is more important than ever to hold individual weekly one-on-one meetings with your people.**

Ideally, these should be via video to maintain the feeling of connectedness that comes from seeing someone's face, not just hearing their voice.

Work Out Loud



While it is important to trust, it is also important to be seen to be doing what is required – even if for no other reason than just to alleviate any potential concerns on the part of your team members and managers.

Learn to start sharing appropriate milestones with your colleagues and managers.

Keep relevant people in the loop with what you are doing, any challenges you are having, and any successes you achieve.

This is even more important in the early days as everyone gets used to working separately and remotely.

Hanlon's Razor

What is 'Hanlon's Razor'?

“Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity”

While I am not suggesting for a moment that any of your team is acting or will act 'stupidly', I do want to present the notion that 'malice' is rarely someone's motivation.

When a challenge or conflict occurs, as it will, before potentially jumping to the conclusion that he or she intended to cause strife, consider all the other possible alternatives first.

This is even more important when we are all working so separately and do not have the physical clues and cues to help effectively guide us through situations.

Personal styles



Some people thrive being on camera - others would rather crawl under a rock.

Some people love spending hours pouring over numbers in a spreadsheet - others panic when

asked to calculate how to split the bill.

We are all different – and they are glorious differences!

Especially now that we are working remotely, consider the personal styles of each of your team.

For instance, if you have someone who rarely speaks up in a meeting but might drop by your office later, make sure you give that person encouragement to reach out via a video chat – they may recoil at the idea, but it is vital to make sure *all* people are heard and are able to contribute.

There are so many elements to discuss here – I could write an entire book on this subject alone – but the purpose of this document is simply to highlight elements you may wish to consider as we all navigate this new way of working.

Encourage Informal Conversations with Managers

‘Fly-by’ and ‘drop in’ are terms that were once part of how people stayed in touch and communicated.

It is important to keep up that level of connectedness – although now we need to find a way to do it virtually.

Think about this as no different from being in the office environment. There are times when you welcome the distraction and others when it is not appropriate.

Consider letting your people know if you are available for them to simply give you a ring or preferably a video call just to have a chat.

Virtual Water-Cooler Chats

Similar to the last comment on informal conversations with managers, it is important for people to feel they can connect on an informal basis with their work colleagues.

Humans are social animals – well, most of them – and providing an avenue for people to simply chat with each other is so very important.

Consider making it a point of letting people know that you encourage this activity – and then trust that it will not be abused.

Work Buddy



Many people work best when they work with someone else, as opposed to working alone.

If that is the case with some or even many of you people, ask them to self-select a work buddy

with whom they can regularly connect, chat, bounce ideas.

This is different from a formal peer mentoring situation, but rather someone with whom they know they can touch base when they feel themselves starting to go a little stir crazy...

Host Regular Bonding Activities

When people work closely together, they form various bonds.

Just because we are all working remotely, doesn't mean that cannot still happen.

Consider hosting one or more of the following once a week or once a month, even just for 10 minutes – via video:

- Share family photos
- Best thing that happened that week
- Share an activity eg painting
- Review the ‘14 Day Challenge’ items and see if there are any of those that would work for your team to share here

Resolve Conflict Face-To-Face

Personally, I don't believe in conflict, because I feel that if we are mindful enough, and effective enough communicators, we can always find a way through before it escalates that far.

However, it is likely in groups who do not share this philosophy that conflict will happen – and that's ok. It's part of life.

It is important that when you address and resolve conflict, that it is done face-to-face via video.

Communication is hard enough at the best of times, but if re rely only on written words, or even

just on our voice, we are missing a vast number of clues and cues that will help more effectively get to the source of the issue and more successfully resolve the conflict.

Regular Evaluations and Self Evaluations

There is an old adage:

We do a good job, we do a good job, we do a good job, we do a good job, we do a good job, we eventually maybe one day get a pat on the back...

We stuff up, we hear about it straight away!

This becomes even more poignant when people are working remotely and we often do not think to check in to see how they are doing, if they are succeeding, if they need additional support, if they see any areas the entire team could

improve – and many people simply won't ask for fear of being a burden or not wanting to insert themselves where they feel they may be stepping on toes.

Here are some suggested headings you might like to put into a regular evaluation and/or self-evaluation document to help facilitate the process of review and feedback.

List the **Primary Position-Specific Goals** as per your Position Description

For each one, briefly discuss

a) Your progress

b. Any relevant successes

c. Any relevant obstacles

d. Additional comments
you would like to pass on
to your manager

- My greatest achievement in
the past month:

- Why I feel that was my
greatest achievement:

- My biggest challenge in the
past month:

- Why I feel that was my
biggest challenge:

- Aspect of my position I am
most enjoying and why:

- What I am intending to achieve in the next month:
- My suggestions for improvement in my position/the team:

Virtual and Remote “Life”

This section of the book deals with how to effectively live as happily as possible during this challenging time; and how to keep your family productive, healthy, and positive.

When I say ‘healthy’, I’m not talking about the virus – I mean general physical health given the current confines of the perimeter or our living rooms, and hallways.

As I mentioned earlier, if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information, please

feel free to reach out to
admin@BellaStJohn.com.

I will also be holding some virtual events, free training, Q&As, etc, and you can find information on those at:

www.BellaStJohn.com/events

Be Prepared

My Nan taught me to always be prepared and to rely on myself.

Part of that preparation is knowing what to have on hand as the basics.

In this section, I will cover setting up a basic pantry, and a basic tool kit.

I realise food is difficult to get, and even Amazon deliveries to put together a basic tool kit while housebound may not be available, but just in case you can, here are some suggestions.

Basic Kitchen Food Items



Especially if you are able to add some meat or vegetarian equivalent, with the following, you can make and bake just about anything.

I will be posting recipes and ideas on items you can

supplement (eg using pureed fruit to replace an egg in baking) every now and again on the new website I am creating:

www.ElegantlyCreative.com

If you would like to know when I upload a new tip, creation, or idea, simply add your email to the subscribe area at the top of the page.

Pantry:

- Boxes of pasta
- Rice
- Noodles
- Assorted grains
- Cereal & oatmeal
- Chicken broth
- Nuts and seeds
- Dried fruit
- Potatoes
- Onions
- Peanut Butter
- Honey
- Pesto – both tomato and basil
- Oils – both olive and vegetable
- Vinegar

Tinned Food:

Tinned food is almost bomb-proof and lasts and lasts and lasts – plus, if you are creative, you can make all sorts of things using basic canned food as an ingredient

- Soups
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Meats
- Fish
- Beans
- Coconut cream
- Tomato puree

Baking Items:

- Baking soda
- Baking powder
- Corn starch
- White Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Chocolate Chips
- Plain Flour
- Self-raising Flour
- Cornflour

Condiments, Herbs, and Spices:

- Salt
- Pepper
- Tomato sauce
- Soy Sauce
- Chutneys (these are terrific for seasoning otherwise bland casseroles etc)
- Various sauces (again, excellent for adding to dishes)
- Parsley
- Chives
- Mustard
- Garlic
- Any other herbs and spices you enjoy

Refrigerated Items:

- Milk
- Cream
- Yoghurt
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Mayonnaise
- Butter

Powdered Options:

There are powdered options of many items that are perfectly fine when used in cooking or baking, for example:

- Powdered milk
- Powdered egg

Frozen Items:

- Spinach
- Vegetables
- Fruit

What You Can Make:

In addition to the obvious casseroles and other ways to make a little go a long way, you can also make:

- **Bread – I suggest you look online for recipes for Soda Bread – it is extremely easy and quick to make and doesn't require any yeast!**
- Tortillas
- Yoghurt
- Cakes
- Pies
- Biscuits
- ...and more...

What You Can Freeze:

We often think of freezing left-overs, but you can also successfully freeze:

- Bread
- Tortillas
- Yoghurt (preferably Greek-style as it has a lower water content)
- Milk
- Cream
- Cheese
- Onions
- Potatoes
- ...and more...

Tool Kit

As with the kitchen list, you may already have these items covered, but if not, here is a list of the basics that will get you out of trouble in most instances:

- Adjustable wrench
- Batteries
- Carpenter's glue
- Cordless drill, and drill bits
- Disposable gloves
- Duct tape
- Electrical tape
- Flashlight
- General purpose saw
- Hammer
- Nails (various sizes)

- Needle Nose Pliers
- Nuts and bolts
- Pencil
- Pliers
- Plunger
- Protective glasses
- Replacement blubs/globes
- Sandpaper, assorted grit
- Scissors
- Screwdrivers - flathead and Phillips, large and small
- Screws (various sizes)
- Staple gun
- String
- Supa glue
- Tape measure - 25 foot long
- Utility knife
- Wire cutter

How to Stay Connected



As a society, we are simultaneously more connected and disconnected than we have ever been.

We have more social media and technology tools at our fingertips to help us stay connected than at any time in history, and yet we have become very isolationist and often self-absorbed in the process – but right now, that might be a useful skillset.

In this section, I will discuss some thoughts on how to stay connected at a time when most of us are housebound – and how we can have fun in the process.

Video Tips

‘More people fear public speaking than anything else’...

We have heard all that before, and the adage holds true for many when it comes to making videos and/or being on video chats.

For a lot of people it is terrifying.

This is where another adage of ‘practice makes perfect’ comes into play – and while we are not aiming for perfection, at least the more we practice, the more familiar we become with the technology, and the less daunting it will become.

- Practice taking selfie videos with your phone and talk to it as though you were talking to someone you love – you can always delete it if you really hate the result, but **remember, your loved ones don't want perfection – they just want to see you!**
- Keep the camera still – preferably on a table-mounted tripod if you have one
- Look at the phone's camera, not yourself on the screen
- If you are in the kitchen and video chatting while you cook, for instance,

make sure they can hear you as you clatter about

- Have the camera in landscape (sideways) – it's easy to remember if you think of it as having the same orientation as that of a television screen



Video Apps

My goodness, where to start...

I will just mention the ones I use on what is now almost a daily basis:

Zoom - my preferred option for business-related or when we will have a lot of people on the video call

WhatsApp - my preferred texting, chatting, and impromptu video app

Skype - this is my go-to app for calls, but I use it for video simply because I have several friends who

use it as their main communication tool.

Facebook - and while for many this is their main source of video chatting through 'Facetime', again for me I only really use it because it is the go-to app for several friends.

Staying Connected to Family, Friends, and Community

In this section, I will give you a number of ideas just to get your own creative juices flowing with regard to ways you can stay connected over and above simply chatting on the phone or text.

Watch Movies Together Virtually

There are some groups on Twitter that are getting together at a pre-determined time to watch a pre-determined movie together. Apparently they are having a wonderful time!

You could do the same with your friends and loved ones.

Find a movie online - or if you are all in the same geographic location, find one that is screening on free-to-air or cable - set up your smart phones, and connect with each other via whatever is your preferred video chat app.

Wine-o-clock

I host a wine-o-clock for friends each month.

It is an informal gathering via video (I use Zoom for this) for whoever happens to be available to drop in.

Because the majority of my friends are in the UK, Europe, and the USA, I chose 1:30pm Eastern time as the best option, making it after work but before dinner for those in UK/Europe, and lunchtime for those on or near the east coast of the States (apologies to those who live in the west!)

Virtual Karaoke

This is hilarious - although as with 'real' karaoke, is best conducted late at night and with sufficient libations to loosen up the vocal chords.

The host prepares by finding a range of karaoke videos on YouTube and copies the URLs ready to go.

Everyone meets via video (again I use Zoom), and the host does a screenshare of their laptop so whoever is 'performing' can sing along!

Virtual Date Night



For those not fortunate enough to be in the same lockdown place as their beloved (and no smart comments from the gallery about those who wish they weren't! LOL!), consider having a virtual date night.

You could cook together, watch a movie together, read a book together, or do anything else that takes your fancy (and again, I am leaving that to your imagination).

Virtual Board Games



There are any number of virtual board games available.

One simple one that I have been using for years is 'Words With Friends', a version of Scrabble.

Each morning I look forward to connecting with my dear friend, Lucy, and we have several games on the go.

Additionally, you could play a board game such as chess and text your move to your fellow player. While today each square is allocated a letter and number, and is easier to use, I still like the old version of “knight to queen's bishop 3”, much more eloquent.

Virtual Charades

Again, involving a group of people each chiming in via video.

The host will have sent out via email or text the 'thing' that the person needs to mime.

These can be:

- Television shows
- Names of books
- Celebrities
- Place Names

The list is endless...

Share a Journal

My dear friend Karen was in home isolation recently and she wrote an hilarious daily journal on Facebook giving her blow by blow account of her quarantine.

For some their online journaling with be funny, for others, contemplative...

Whatever your style, consider the benefits of sharing your thoughts with the outside world...

Virtual Fancy Dress Party

I will be hosting one of these for friends in the coming month or so.

Again, as with karaoke, it is best held later in the day/evening, and preferably on a weekend.

We had several people who wanted to attend the Venice Carnevale in February, but for various reasons were not able to go.

So, our first virtual fancy dress party will be in honour of our friends like Irene who live in and near Venice, Italy - and have been in lock-down for so long that when we asked her how long it had

been, Irene honestly couldn't remember...

Again, this will be via Zoom, and will be hosted similarly to the Wine-O-Clock event.

Virtual Book Club



Books are an essential part of my life – I write them, read them, and often simply need to be near them to feel complete.

Just because we cannot meet up in person is no reason for us not to continue with book clubs.

Gather a group of like-minded friends, choose a book, and decide how much of the book everyone will read before each meeting – sometimes it might be a few chapters – with other books it might be the entire book.

Here are some questions you might like to use to get the conversation going:

- What was your initial reaction to the book?
- Did any characters especially appeal to you?

- What was your favourite part of the book?
- How did you relate to the book/the characters?
- Did the book change your opinion or perspective about anything?
- Did the book raise any questions for you?
- If the book were being adapted into a movie or television series, who would you want to see play what parts?

Learn How to Use Hashtags Effectively

If you are going to be spending a lot of your time on social media and hashtags are a bit of a foreign concept for you, here is a book I wrote a while ago - Hashtag 101 - that may help you to more effectively engage.



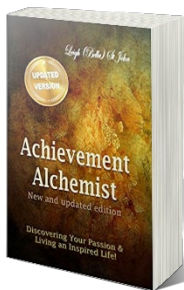
You can download it for free here:
www.BellaStJohn.com/books

How to Stay Positive



This is a topic with which many struggle, and not just as a result of the current worldwide situation.

In this section, we will look at a few ideas to stay happy and healthy, with a positive outlook.



You might also like to download **'The Achievement Alchemist: Discovering Your Passion and Living An Inspired Life'** book I wrote some time ago – I've just made it a free download here:

www.BellaStJohn.com/books

Mindset

To extend the Eleanor Roosevelt quote, 'no one can make you feel *anything* without your consent'.

Yes, the current situation is challenging - but it is up to us to stay focused on the positive and continue to have a mindset that supports us and our loved ones.

Regularly ask yourself questions such as:

- What's one thing that you love doing that you are still able to do?
- What's one thing you did today you're proud of?

- What's one thing you're grateful for?
- What's one thing you've never done before but you are taking this opportunity to spread your wings and learn something new?
- What's one thing you're excited about for tomorrow?

For those who are managing others, these might also be questions you ask your team members during your one-on-one meetings to help them stay focused on the positive.

Where to Find Positive News Stories

What streams to our televisions isn't always the happiest of news, but there is an abundance of good, positive news available if you know where to look!

Just today as I was finishing this book, I learned of a man in New York City who is now dating his neighbour after he found creative ways to woo her during quarantine:

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/watch-nyc-man-woo-his-neighbor-during-covid-quarantines/>

Here are some sites to get you started:

- <https://www.positive.news/>
- <https://www.goodnewsnet.work.org/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cx2pk70323et/uplifting-stories>
- <https://www.readersdigest.ca/culture/good-news-stories-world/>
- <https://www.today.com/news/good-news>

Care for others

Even if we cannot go outside to care for others, there are ample opportunities to care for others.

I am setting up a regular video chat with a senior citizens home whose residents are confined for at least 12 weeks.

One of the nurses is providing her phone on their end and we will be chatting about all manner of things - and even having the occasional sing-a-long (being raised by my Nan, I know all manner of tunes that will even pre-date the residents! It really is a long way to Tipperary...)

#ViralKindness

If you are able to get out to support the various services that are providing deliveries to those in need, you might like to check out this hashtag.

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

<input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail
<input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. **#ViralKindness**

Be Mindful of What You Watch

While it is important to stay up to date with the various guidelines and recommendations from health and government authorities, be mindful of the messages and images you allow into your world.

For instance, we have enough of a challenge with the actual virus situation, do we really need to watch 'Contagion' the movie (that is apparently becoming one of the most watched films online)?

Positive Language

It's time to invoke the philosophy of 'The Little Engine That Could' and practice some "I think I can..."

More than perhaps ever before, we need to all be mindful of keeping our language and our focus on the positive.

Talk about what we *can* do, what we *can* achieve...

- Turn "I don't see why not" into "Sure, let's give it a go!"
- "I can't complain" becomes "Everything's going well, thanks"

Learn something new

Stuck at home?

If you have a computer and an internet connection, you have a world of choices at your fingertips!

If you choose to spend this time watching re-runs on television, of course that is your prerogative, but consider the amazing opportunity this time brings to learn something new...

Take an Online Course

Not sure where to start to find online courses?

Here are just two of my go-to sites:

The Open Education Database has over 10,000 free courses from which to choose:

<https://oedb.org/open/>

...but **my absolute favourite is Masterclass** – it does require paying a fee, but I believe it is well worth it!

www.MasterClass.com

Experience the World Virtually



We may all – or at least most of us – be housebound at present, but we can still experience the great big, amazing world!

...and you don't need a virtual reality headset!

In this section I will provide some thoughts on how you can go travelling around the globe from the comfort of your living room...

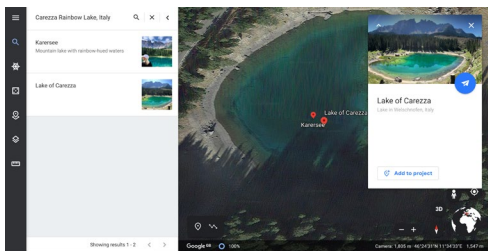
Go On a Virtual Vacation

If you are like me, you have a number of places on your bucket list (www.LuxuriousNomad.com/bucket-list) yet to visit.

Choose just one to start and decide to go on a virtual vacation.

For instance, Carezza Rainbow Lake in Italy is somewhere I would like to go – so I decided to take a virtual vacation!

Using Google Earth, I located it and was able to virtually fly around, see the lake, the surrounding countryside...



I could do internet searches and learn more about the place – for instance, on **Atlas Obscura** (another of my all-time favourite sites), I learned that according to the local folklore, the myriad colours of this lake are the result of a lovelorn wizard's blunder.

Virtually Visit Museums and Galleries

Search online and you will find a glorious abundance of **museums and galleries that provide virtual tours**. Here are just a few to get you started:

My favourite city in the world, **Vienna**, has a number of virtual ways to experience its charm and elegance:

<https://www.wien.info/en/sights/seeing/sights/a-virtual-way-to-marvel-at-vienna>

London's British Museum:
<https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/>

Uffizi Gallery in Florence:
<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/uffizi-gallery?hl=en>

The J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles:
<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-j-paul-getty-museum?hl=en>

Health and Fitness

We may be inside our homes, but we can still have fun making health and fitness a part of our everyday routine.

Consider these tips and ideas to stay fit and healthy:

Workout Together Virtually - using the techniques we discussed earlier for virtual get togethers

Hopscotch - simply apply tape to the carpet and you are good to go!

Stair Climbing - not everyone will have stairs, but if you do, put them to good use!

Dancing – can't dance? That's no excuse – there are plenty of videos on YouTube to teach you how!

Workout Videos – again, YouTube is an excellent source of every type of workout imaginable.

Improve Your Golf Game – if you're a keen golfer, or would like to be, set up your very own putting range in a hallway or similar. Don't have a golf club? Where is your imagination?! Find a stick, find something small and flat, tape them together and voila!

14 Day Challenge

Sometimes it is easier to tackle a seemingly endless project by breaking it into chunks.

We don't know how long the lock-downs will continue, so let's look at breaking them into 14-day blocks, and creating a challenge for each.

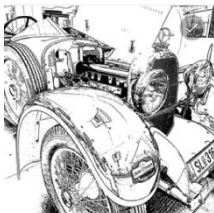
Here are some ideas:

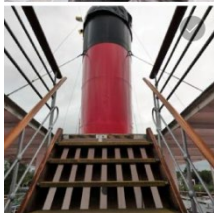
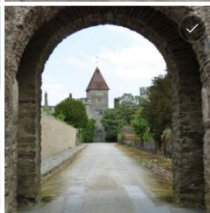
Drawing - you could learn to draw over the next 14 days, giving yourself a different challenge or topic each day. I even took several of my photographs and turned them into line drawings to help you get started - or to provide

additional colouring material for youngsters. You can find them on the new website I am building: www.ElegantlyCreative.com

Feel free to download and use them to your heart's content.

These images will give you an idea of the line drawings and their originals...





Photography – as with drawing, take a different topic each day for the 14 days.

New Word – learn a new word each day for 14 days. I have an app on my phone, ‘Word of the Day’, that delivers me a new and sometimes quite unusual word every morning.

Quote – learn a new famous quote every day. You might even have a quote to go along with your photography topic each day.

Poem – learn to recite a different poem every day for 14 days

Vision Board – create and add to your vision board every day or 14

days and at the end, share your creation with friends

Go Sugar-Free – especially since groceries are getting harder to source, consider going sugar-free for 14 days (but if you do any challenge such as this it is important you look at it as fun, rather than additional deprivation!) Be creative and find other ways to satisfy your sweet-tooth

Daily Blog or Vlog – choose a topic each day and write a blog or record a vlog

Clean out the Garage/Spare Room – you could make this a challenge to ensure you finish within the 14 day timeframe

Organise Your Photos – all those photos on your phone and/or your computer – make the next 14 days a challenge to get them all sorted and organised

Learn a Language – set yourself a goal for your 14 day challenge. Perhaps it is to be able to translate and recite one of your poems in your new language...

Be Creative and Make Things

We have turned into a 'throw-away' and 'fast-food' society.

Let's use this opportunity to be creative, make things at home, use what we have, repair what breaks, and have fun in the process!

I will be posting ideas, interesting recipes, tips, and other creative 'stuff' (that's a highly technical term, use it with care) on my new www.ElegantlyCreative.com website as I build it out - and if you want me to let you know when I upload something new, simply

add your email at the top of the page.

Here are some ideas to get you going:

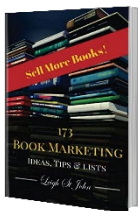
Cooking can be fun! Don't just rely on your usual handful of dishes you cook over and again - search online for recipes that incorporate what you have in the cupboard and be creative!

Dig for Victory - that was the motto during WWII to encourage people to plant vegetables to support the war effort. If you can, create your own garden and grow edible produce. I am about to do that in the conservatory in my holiday home in Scotland and will

put photos up on the website as the pot-based garden takes shape.

Write That Book – almost everyone says they have a book in them. So, write it! You could even go all out and publish it on Amazon...

...or if you have already written a **book**, invest this time into letting people know it exists!



I wrote '173 Book Marketing Ideas, Tips, and Lists' back when I had a

book marketing business – I didn't have a chance to see if there are any references to that business in the book (I wanted to get this book out as soon as possible), but just confirming we no longer offer those services. **There is enough information and marketing ideas in the book, however, to keep you going for months! ...and most of it you can do for free.**

You can download the PDF of the book for free here:

www.BellaStJohn.com/books

Blackboard Paint – this is a wonderful idea for those who have small children. Sacrifice a wall in your home, paint it with blackboard paint, given them

chalks and a rag as an eraser and let them have fun.

Collaborate Virtually on a Project
- do you have an idea on which you and one or two friends could collaborate? Now is the perfect time...

How to Stay Productive

It is easy to allow the current situation to sap our motivation.

Here are a few tips to help stay productive and inspired:

Yoda – my personal motto and that which is on my personal crest is ‘Facere Vel Non Facere’, Latin for Yoda’s immortal, ‘Do or do not’. Make a conscious decision to follow Yoda’s advice – there is no such thing as ‘try’.

Dress like you are going out – even when confined to home, there is something quite

personally empowering about getting dressed and looking good.

Schedules - many people work better if they have a schedule to follow in order to achieve a specific result. If that is you, consider setting up a daily routine, similar to that you would have if you were in the office every day. Print a copy for your family as well so they know how best to support you - when they can interrupt you and when they can't.

Prioritisation - get clear on your vision for yourself, your family, and your career - and use that vision to help guide you as you prioritise what needs to be done and when.

Unplug - at least one day per week, consider totally unplugging. No television, no computer, no phone... It might seem counter-intuitive when we have less connection to the outside world than normal, but when every opportunity to connect means we are attached to a device of some sort, it is important to simply spend time just 'be-ing'.

Life Goes On



'It's life, Jim, but not as we know it' were the words from a quirky song by The Firm (and the above graphic is from the clip) - and if you haven't heard it, it's worth a few minutes of fun to listen and watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCARADb9asE>

...but the reason I mention that, is we have a situation where this is 'life', but not as we know it – and who knows what the world will look like on the other end of this current challenge.

The best we can do is to stay positive, fit, happy, healthy, and productive.

To round out this short book of tips and ideas, here are just a couple to help you stay on track:

Focus on Your Life Goals

The world may look different when we finally get past this crisis, but it is still important to have life goals upon which we can focus.

Do It Now

When I was a keynote speaker, I would often recite a quote from Michael Landon about the power of 'now'. After all, 'now' is all we really have – and even when you just read that, that moment is already in the past and no longer 'now'... There are any number of things that if we didn't do them at

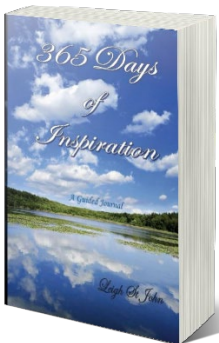
the time, they are no longer available to us... Going to the top of the World Trade Centre, visiting a loved one who has since passed away... We don't have 'one day' - we only have 'now'.

“Somebody should tell us, right at the start of our lives, that we are dying. Then we might live life to the limit, every minute of every day. Do it! I say. Whatever you want to do, do it NOW! There are only so many tomorrows.”

Michael Landon

Write in Your Gratitude Journal Each Day

A few years ago I published an 'inspiration journal', and I thought it might be a good idea to **make the journal available as a free downloadable PDF** for anyone who would like to use it as a prompter to stay on track and focus on the positive things for which to be grateful.



You can find the link for the download to **'365 Days of Inspiration'** on my 'books' page: www.BellaStJohn.com/books

Whether you use this or another journal - or even writing with chalk on your blackboard-painted wall, each day the things for which you are appreciative, and write

them down... You might even like to write appreciation notes to loved ones...

The extraordinary teacher, mentor and business philosopher, [Jim Rohn](#) had a wonderful quote about journals...

[“I am a buyer of blank books. Kids find it interesting that I would buy a blank book.](#)

[They say, “Twenty-six dollars for a blank book! Why would you pay that?”](#)

[The reason I pay 26 dollars is to challenge myself to find something worth 26 dollars to put in there.](#)

All my journals are private, but if you ever got a hold of one of them, you wouldn't have to look very far to discover it is worth more than 26 dollars."

Final Note

As I said at the outset, this book is not meant to be an in-depth ‘anything’ – but rather a collection of thoughts and ideas to help during this challenging time.

If you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information, please feel free to reach out to admin@BellaStJohn.com

If I can help, I will.

Bella St. John

**PS: Please feel free to distribute
this book to anyone you feel may
be able to put it to good use.**

www.BellaStJohn.com

www.ElegantlyCreative.com



Thank you - stay safe, and may
God bless you and your loved
ones with health and happiness...