Leaders at JHU:
Managing Here, There, Anywhere

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WOW!...That is a Lot of Change!

We have now been at this telework thing for a couple of weeks now; it's okay to acknowledge that it is quite a change. It's one thing to take a day to work from home in order to concentrate or "get caught up," but it's a completely different situation to lead an entire organization remotely for the foreseeable future.

The theme of this newsletter is coping with change. As a leader, you need to remember that this shift to telework is also impacting you, not just the members of your team. Therefore it is important to manage the change you are personally experiencing.

Acknowledge to yourself and even to your team if this experience is difficult. What's causing challenges? Is it mastering new technology? Staying connected with your boss? Managing the demands of work and home all melding together in one location? Is it the overall uncertainty of the situation? It's okay to say yes to these and many more!

Make sure you practice self care during this time. Grant yourself some grace and do not be too hard on yourself. You will be a better leader for it.

Keeping Up with Your Routine

During this time of unexpected change, it's important to establish routines and a productive environment for working from home. Here are some tips and strategies for your new telework routine:

- Create a comfortable, dedicated work space. If possible, only use that space when you're working.

- Establish regular hours. Set a schedule with meetings and breaks. Do your best to stick to it.

- Start your day by getting ready for work before checking your emails. Follow your bathroom routine, get your children situated, and get that cup of coffee or tea before you sit down at your desk. This will reduce the need to start and stop as you begin your day.

- Dress for the job, not your environment. Staying in pajamas seems appealing, but getting dressed helps formalize the start of your day.

- Utilize your morning and evening commute time for a walk or meditation.

More Best Practices for Leading Change

Leading virtual teams is how we're adapting to this change. Here are some practical tips for helping lead teams through this time:

- You probably cannot over communicate during this time. Communicate often and in different formats. Don't just email; mix it up. Schedule that daily, quick virtual huddle, keep your 1:1 meetings (possibly shorter but more frequently), send a funny meme, video or quote or just a "how are you doing" text.

- Be clear about what hasn't changed. How you work and where you work may have changed but probably not the people you serve or the purpose for your work.

- Create temporary practices and procedures that make it easier for your teams to cope during this time. Brainstorm new ideas to old problems because you are working in new ways.

- Empower people to be creative in this extraordinary moment. Let them think of new ways to get the work done. Step back and see what they come up with. Be available when they need help.

- Now is not the time to stop providing feedback. Continuously give constructive and specific feedback to team members about how they are performing,

- Celebrate the minor milestones as well as the big wins. Just getting through each week will feel like a lot.

- Expect the unexpected on your virtual meetings, in the assignments you are given, and in ways you need to get the work done.

- Say thank you

- Breathe

- And say thank you again

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