

# Working from Home: The Opportunity

by Sue Bethanis, CEO, Mariposa Leadership, Inc.

[sueb@mariposaleadership.com](mailto:sueb@mariposaleadership.com)

March 9, 2020

If you're a knowledge worker living in the Bay Area and are not already working from home (WFH) by choice or by company policy, my guess is you soon will be. I suspect we will be following Seattle's lead this week or next.

I have been working from home for 24 years as an Executive Coach, and I work with tech leaders who have made the transition to WFH in the past. Am working from home today, in fact, keeping tabs on my sick teen (he's without-a-fever, but keeping him home for public health reasons).

Last Tuesday, I "penned" an article on "[How to Be Leaderly in Utter Uncertainty.](#)" Today, I am addressing WHAT AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO WORK FROM HOME. *The Economist* addresses the business opportunity of WFH [here](#). *The WSJ* addresses the practical things of WFH, like your tech set up, [here](#).

I am looking at a different opportunity: what you can do with that hour (or two) you just got back from no commuting and not having to sprint from meeting to meeting. And you're not traveling, so you're getting that time back, too. So, you really do have more time on your hands. I imagine you're spending time getting set up and getting used to the idea that you're using your dining room table or old card table as your workstation.

Once you have your set up, what are you going to do with that extra hour?

## Three Ideas: Self-care, Family, Strategic Thinking

### Self-care: meditation and exercise

If there is ever a time to practice meditation, now is the time. There is no question our collective anxiety is heightened because of COVID-19, the economy, uncertainty; and our individual anxiety is increased as well. Meditation and mindful breathing can calm us. Perhaps you have let your meditation practice go; if so, start it up again with 10 minutes in the morning. If you have never had a meditation practice, perhaps it's time to start one up. One way to start is through repeating a mantra. I have used this practice for 30 years; it has never gotten old.

Sit in a quiet place with your feet on the floor.

Focus on your breath so that you can feel it go in and out of your nose.

Repeat this mantra:

- May I be happy,
- May I be safe,
- May I be healthy,
- May I live with ease,
- May I be free.

Next, choose a person you're closely connected with. Say his/her name in your mantra. You may want to choose a different person each day or repeat the mantra a couple of times in a day with various people:

- May (name) be happy,
- May \_\_\_ be safe,
- May \_\_\_ be healthy,
- May \_\_\_ live with ease,
- May \_\_\_ be free.

You can learn more about Mindfulness practice, based on Thich Nhat Hahn's work [here](#).



Also, my guess is that you have been wanting to exercise 3-4 times a week, but it slips through the cracks because of the myriad of priorities you have had. Try starting with 20 minutes on that exercise machine that is collecting dust or take a morning walk for 20 minutes.

### **Family: walking and connecting**

You can create a “two-fer” opportunity if you walk with one of your family members or friends in the morning or as a break in the late afternoon. What an incredible opportunity we have that we get to see our family members more. Yes, I know – especially if you have kids – you’re going to have to create some boundaries for your work space and time; however, use this opportunity to put attention on your family members that you haven’t been able to do the past year, 5 years, 10 years...you know what I am talking about. Connect with them in a way you haven’t been able to in the past.

### **Strategy/Design: (Yes, you have been putting this off )**

Once you get into your daily routine of WFH, think about that hour you have because you’re not sitting in your car. You have been putting off doing strategy work. And whatever strategic or vision documents you do have, they might need to be revised based on the new normal – the business climate took a huge detour last week, and today, March 9th, the DOW dropped 2000 points.

Re-looking at your business proposition, product, or market(s) might make some sense! So, what new scenario planning should you do? What approach could you take? For the past 10 years, I have used a *Design Thinking* approach with my company, Mariposa Leadership, and have worked with many execs and their teams using this approach. This requires looking at the market in a different way and bringing in your customers to solve problems WITH you. This *Design Thinking* method is outlined [here](#). Typically, these types of journeys are done in person. Now, you have the time to do these types of brainstorming meetings via videoconferencing. **What a cool opportunity!**

## **About the Author**

Susan J. Bethanis, Ed.D., is the Founder/CEO of Mariposa Leadership, Inc., a 12-person San Francisco-based firm that provides executive coaching to tech leaders. Mariposa’s recent clients include AppFolio, AWS, Gilead, OpenX, PayPal, Twitch, Theravance, Zuora, and Zynga. Sue’s book, *Leadership Chronicles of a Corporate Sage*, is a fly-on-the-wall account of real conversations between a coach and an executive. Sue received her Doctorate in Education at the University of San Francisco, specializing in Organizational Leadership, and her Master’s Degree in Education from Stanford, specializing in Instructional Design. Contact her at 415-265-3142, [sueb@mariposaleadership.com](mailto:sueb@mariposaleadership.com). Follow her at @suebethanis.

