

Zoomed Out? Some Tips

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Due to the Pandemic, most business professionals are working from home and many may continue to do so even as corporations and businesses reopen. Zoom and its equivalent are now the norms. Quite possibly, you attend or host three or four of these meetings every day. If you are like many people, you find these meetings exhausting. Here are some tips that will prevent you from feeling Zoomed out.

Select a good environment. As inviting as it may seem, your bed should be your last choice. Obviously, you want to demonstrate you are invested in the meeting, and your bed doesn't quite cut it. My home office has windows on three sides so it is not a good choice either since there are no drapes or blinds to filter the light. The brightness of the room casts shadows and makes it difficult for others to see me clearly. My son set up his office in the garage to eliminate distractions and interruptions from his toddlers and to have a designated space to return to each day.

Try to schedule your meetings at an opportune time when kids are sleeping or homeschooling so the noise level is at a minimum. Be conscious of time zone differences. Inform anyone in the household that you are in a meeting and cannot be disturbed to help with a math problem, etc. Shut the door and post

a sign on the outside to remind people not to enter. Silence your cell phone and don't let the dog attend.

Obviously, you want to turn on your computer's video option. It is easier for people to concentrate if they see the person talking. The grid view is best so that you can see everyone in attendance. Position yourself about an arm's distance away from your computer and keep the laptop's camera at eye level. You do not want to be looking down. Place your computer on some books or catalogs if necessary. My computer rests on two Professional Video sourcebooks. Do not forget to pay attention to your posture and to smile. Your smile relaxes and engages others. Resting your chin on your hands makes you look bored.

Agree on some ground rules. Should the host mute people or should attendees do it. How will you handle questions or discussion? Should people wave their hand to ask a question or simply start talking? Ground rules can prevent people from talking over others or interrupting.

Try not to schedule back to back meetings. You will feel overwhelmed and your eyes need a rest. If possible, get up and walk around between meetings. Grab some coffee or lunch and engage in conversation with whoever is in your household. Play with your children for a bit. If possible, go outside and get some fresh air.

Finally, do not work on weekends or evenings. Constantly working will drive you nuts and make you less able to be fully productive the following week. You absolutely need to refresh yourself.

While Zoom is a wonderful way to keep people connected, it does have some drawbacks. Maximize your time on Zoom by embracing these tips and paying attention to your own needs. You will feel less stressed out.

Question: *How are you personally handling the barrage of Zoom meetings? What keeps you sane? Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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