

SHE IS BRAVE

LIVING ENCOURAGED MINISTRIES

FINDING YOUR BALANCE WORKING FROM HOME

6 tips to keep your balance
working from home.

BUILDING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Strengthening your faith muscles by
creating inner strength through
focusing on inner core building.

EMBRACING SECLUSION & SOLITUDE

The importance and benefits that
come from a time of isolation
and solitude.

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LOVE NOTE

Dear Beautiful Friend,

Hope and Faith is what we all are holding onto as we stand united against this battle we are faced with. COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus has wreaked havoc in the lives of so many and stolen innocent lives from families and loved ones.

It's in the midst of these storms we must rally together in prayer, hope and faith. Hope and faith restores us from feeling helpless in times like this. Prayer restores peace in our heart, mind and soul.

We will have moments where we feel overwhelmed, hurt, saddened, worried and stressed. And that's expected in times like this. But no matter what, we know there is hope for restoration and healing throughout every country and Nation.

She Is BRAVE is a magazine created with you in mind. My heart's desire has been on this for nearly a year and God revealed this time is the season where we need more encouragement than ever before. This is the time we must all be reminded of just how Brave we are. Especially in the face of the most scariest of times, we hold onto the strength and courage from the Most High God.

My hearts prayer is that you will find hope and encouragement in Jesus Christ. I pray through this season you will find your strength in Him to carry you forward through this difficult season.

God Bless You!


Ileen



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She sets about
her work
vigorously;
her arms are
strong for
her tasks.

Proverbs 31:17



GALLUP SURVEY

47%

OF THE
WORKFORCE IN
2018 WERE
WOMEN.

WITH TODAY'S
TECHNOLOGY,
WORKING FROM
HOME HAS BEEN
MADE EASIER,
ESPECIALLY NOW
AS WE FACE
COVID-19.

FINDING YOUR BALANCE WORKING FROM HOME

6 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR BALANCE WORKING FROM HOME

Working from home comes with many great perks. But if we aren't careful, we can easily lose track of where we need to be. We can lose our balance between work and life. Especially for parents.

As a mama bear of three awesome guys, I applaud our teachers that have taken our children under their wings with so much grace and patience.

I recall the days when my boys were younger and in school. Anytime one of the boys was sick and home for a few days, I'd always request the homework so they wouldn't get behind. I remember taking days off work to care for them and spending time helping the boys with their school work. Honestly, I felt like I needed a 4th grade refresher. That work is no joke!

Even though I had requested time off from my full-time job, I still had my own work I needed to stay on top of. It wasn't easy. I remember the days being at work wishing I could be home with the kids. I swore up and down I could definitely rock working remotely from home. But I realized it wasn't as easy as it appeared. I often found myself extremely exhausted and completely off balance.

At work I had a schedule. A set agenda for each day. I knew what had to be completed each day, calls that needed to be made, appointments and meetings to attend. But while at home, it was so easy to lose balance of my entire day.

I'd create a plan for the day but eventually would find myself doing doing laundry and making snacks for the kids. I wasn't balancing my time effectively and before I knew it, the day was over and I was done, mentally.

Today I work full-time in ministry as the Founder of Living Encouraged Ministries. As a Christian author, I spend my days writing new Bible studies and courses as well as blogging and hosting the Living Encouraged with Ileen podcast. But through it all, I proudly babysit my granddaughter Bella.



It wasn't easy at first. But I soon learned I needed to find balance in order to make my work life cohesive with my family and home life.

Through much trial and error on my part, which was primarily a result of me trying to overachieve more, I found myself doing less. And resenting that I wasn't fulfilling my daily goals as a result of spending more time on house chores.

I saw change was desperately needed if I wanted this to work. I began to analyze what I needed to change and where I needed to create structure.

Working from home comes with many challenges. But when we create an effective way to balance out our work from home, we can be exceptionally productive and successful.

With COVID-19 creating much disruption in our lives today, many have been assigned to work from home. And for many parents whose children aren't able to return to school, education is also now being assigned to the parents. Leaving many balancing work, children's education, home and life. All while maintaining sanity.

Because in all honesty, it's exactly what we face today. Coping with so

much change in one lump sum. And working to keep our head above water.

Here are 6 tips I found so helpful in finding balance between work and home. Through the application of these 6 tips, you will learn to create boundaries. By creating boundaries you will create healthy proactive solutions essential for every demand and challenge. This will essentially help in avoiding the pressures of working from home.

forget all the
reasons why
it won't work
and believe
the one
reason why it
will.

1. Create A Schedule

An essential way to ensure you don't overwhelm yourself, is to create a schedule. Treat this schedule like the one you had in your office. Set aside a balanced schedule where you create boundaries for every area between work, family, and home task. Schedule a time for checking emails, making those needed phone calls and appointments. Set aside a time where you know there won't be any distractions or interruptions. For parents home-schooling, set aside a time where you will be focused on your child's assignments and not attempting to juggle between school work and your work. Trust me, this will create major overwhelm in most cases.

2. Establish Some Rules

A key element in balancing both work and home are RULES. By establishing some ground rules, you are creating boundaries between your work and personal life. You are creating reasonable expectations of what you will accomplish for work as well as what you expect to accomplish with the kiddos and/or in your home. Set guidelines. This helps establish a healthy work pace which prevents burnout and overwhelm. If you say, from 8-10 am you are taking care of all calls and correspondence, stick to this time frame. Don't allow distractions during these 2 hours. Maintain focused and on task.

3. Set Up Your Office/Workspace

Set up a workspace that will be conducive to your needs. Ensure your workspace is well organized. Have all essential supplies and equipment necessary to complete your work. Most importantly, and this is a huge factor, ensure this designated space is free from all distractions and interruptions. If you are limited with space, carve out a corner in your bedroom or dining area for yourself. Tell the family or any roomies with you to work with you on the time you need to complete your work.

4. Create Your Weekly Planner & Goals

It is very important to establish your weekly goals. Followed by prioritizing what must be completed first and so forth. Then breakdown the entire week's tasks by day, simplifying what you are wanting to accomplish. I usually create a weekly To Do's List and then a daily list. This has helped me keep track of what I have to do that day and where I am with accomplishing them. I just mark through what is already done as I move along.

5. Work Smarter Not Harder

Use your time wisely. It's easy to get caught up working harder at home than in the office. That results when the time we allocate for work is not used wisely and effectively. You may feel multitasking is a great way to get it all done, but this can easily create overwhelm and exhaustion. Avoid internet surfing. And most importantly, stay focused on your task. Periodically check your To Do List or Daily Planner to ensure you are meeting your daily expectations.

6. Step Away

Ensure you are taking time to step away from your work and allow yourself to refocus and regroup. Sometimes we can put more time and effort into a project which can easily lead to burn-out and or frustrations. Give yourself that much needed stretch and walk around the house or take a walk outside. But find something you can do for 10-15 minutes to allow you the time to decompress and refuel. Be sure to take your lunch on a specified schedule. Similar to your work schedule in the office. Once you are clocked out from work and homework, home chores are completed, make time for yourself. ME TIME is important. Read a book or your fave magazine. Journal. Pray. Meditate. Read your Bible. Whatever brings you relaxation . ^

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

I read an article that talked about work-life balance. It said, "Work-Life Balance is a term used to describe how workers distribute their time between professional and personal obligations. When someone has a good work-life balance, they're able to allocate their time so they don't overwork and can focus on other aspects of their life like family, friends, hobbies, or social activities."

BALANCE



BUILDING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

**Strengthening your
faith muscles by
creating inner strength
through focusing on
inner core building.**

**"Then we will no
longer be infants,
tossed back and forth
by the waves, and
blown here and there
by every wind."**

Ephesians
4:14



In 2018 God revealed a big A-ha to me. I was just six months into stepping out in faith and leaving a full-time job to follow what God had nestled in my heart.

Life was becoming so real and super fast. I became spiritually and emotionally depleted. I remember hopping on social media and I began seeing post after post of everyone starting off their New Year's resolutions. And here I was trying to figure out if this bold step I had taken was indeed what God had called me to do.

My focus was soon redirected from me to everyone's resolutions. Just like them, I often found myself kicking off the New Year with a goal of creating a healthier version of myself. I'd kick off the year determined to be physically fit.

In that very moment, God revealed to me that all those years I had spent them trying to become physically fit, yet here I

was emotionally and spiritually unfit. I was weak to the core just trying to stay above water. The resolutions I had been so focused on were based on physical appearance. While all along my inner core was being neglected.

It was time I stepped it up and redirected my focus. God showed me what I needed to do. And that was to become spiritually fit and strengthen my inner core so that I could withstand life's greatest challenges.

1 Timothy 4:8 (NIV) tells us, "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

It was time I started strengthening my faith muscles. I began seeing this like a spiritual training bootcamp. Where I would strengthen my spiritual core while nourishing my mind, body, and spirit. I was in dire need of godliness and spiritual training.

5 PRINCIPLES TO BUILDING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

When we get ourselves into what I like to call a Spiritual Bootcamp, we essentially begin building our Faith Muscles. This is a great way to learn how to build the core muscles to our faith. It's about training ourselves up spiritually and also mentally.

We do this so that when we are faced with those difficult moments in life, we won't be tossed back and forth like a boat in the ocean. We will be able to stand firm and grounded on our faith.

We can build our inner core and maximize our inner strength when we apply these 5 essential principles I'm about to share with you.

I challenge you to start working out those Faith Muscles and watch as you build a new level of Confidence and Strength.

1. Nourish Your Mind

Spend time studying scripture and reading the Word of God. Seek scriptures that will encourage and motivate you. Scriptures that you can apply in any situation you face in life. Shut out any doubtful discouraging thoughts. Start your morning meditating on the Word of God and also in prayer. Drink in God's blessings all around you. In John 4:15 it says, "The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'"

2. Strengthen Your Faith Muscles

Believe in all faith that nothing is impossible with God. Through increasing of your faith, you are increasing your strength to overcome obstacles. In order to do this you must Trust in God wholeheartedly. Believe in what you petition Him for. Believe even when you can't see it happening. Magnify your faith and minimize your fears. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 tells us, "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith."

3. Meditate

Focus your energy meditating on God's Word. Psalm 19:14 says, "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight." Take scriptures and write them down, meditating on the Word. Spend those peaceful moments in the stillness and quiet away from all distractions. This is your Jesus Time girlfriend. This exercise will allow you to focus your eyes and mind on God. Clearing out all clutter, solely focusing on this time in the presence of God.


4. Pray

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Daniel 6:10 Just like Daniel, I encourage you to set aside a good time for prayer. Not a time where you are rushing through your day and adding a sprinkle of prayer in there. Slow down. Set aside a dedicated time for prayer. See your prayer not as just a time to petition for your needs, but a time to talk with God about anything on your heart.



5. Train For Your Race

Fix your eyes on Jesus and not on what others say or what they are doing. Don't allow yourself to compete or compare with others' successes. But instead, focus on what God is doing in your life right now. Stay focused on what's ahead and not what took place in the past. Let go. Focus on training for your race and running it at your own pace. Run in full faith that God will bring you through every uphill and downhill. Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us and says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." ^



Now faith is
confidence in
what we hope for
and assurance
about what we do
not see.

Hebrews 11:1

Embracing Seclusion & Solitude

**The importance and benefits that
come from a time of isolation and
solitude.**

"When day came, Jesus left and went to a
secluded place." Luke 4:42





**Solitude: a chosen
separation for
refining your soul.**

**A time to Observe
Inhale
Exhale
Listen
Freedom**

Embracing a time of seclusion and solitude has more benefits than we realize.

Spending time in solitude is defined as a time chosen in separation for refining your soul.

We often think of solitude as a bad thing. It's often looked at as though when a person goes off on their own something is wrong. There's an underlying issue causing this seclusion. But what we don't realize is the great importance that comes with spending time in solitude.

We are now in the midst of a terrible storm. A time where for the safety of others and ourselves, we must distance

ourselves from everyone outside our home as a result of this pandemic. It's important for the sake of everyone, that we live quarantined from everyone. Which I personally have decided to call it a time of "solitude" or "seclusion". To me this sounds so much better than quarantine. We now have been given this time where distractions have been pulled away from us.

We no longer have the privilege to go and come as we please if we want to protect ourselves and our loved ones. We have a choice now. A choice to carefully orchestrate how we use the time we have been given now.

We have a choice to embrace solitude for what it is. A time where we are essentially refining our souls. A time where we are being deliberate with our time, removing any unwanted elements or impurities that are hindering us from moving forward in life.

FINDING PEACE IN SECLUSION

Jesus was known to often go off on his own, in solitude to pray. We read in Mark 1:35 (NIV) where it says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Again we see in

Luke 5:16 (NIV) where Jesus *"withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*

He took this time away from all the distractions and people so that he could enter God's rest. He was able to remain focused, without interruptions, in his prayer time. He was in a place where he connected with God. He listened and found freedom. Freedom to move forward without any hindrance. Forward with clarity.

When I look at where we are today. I see separation from family, work, church, gatherings of any kind, distancing from the familiar and normal. It's easy to feel discouraged, anxious and even fall into depression.

I have learned to find peace in solitude from my own experience last year after my back injury. I learned to use the time where I was usually alone in my room unable to walk or roam around the house, to meditate on God's promises of healing and renewal. I found myself pulling away from the negative discouragement that tempted to bring me down.

I discovered that solitude and seclusion was beneficial for me. It became a time where I could concentrate on my visions and goals. My goals became more vivid and clear. My creativeness became even more enhanced. Simply because every distraction had been removed.

REDIRECTING OUR FOCUS & EMOTIONS

When we steer our focus from the idea of being quarantined, to the thought of being in a chosen state of seclusion and solitude, we can find peace. A peace that allows us to redirect our emotions to a place of refinement. A place where we allow ourselves to begin developing the process of elimination and improvement.

Saying we want growth but not making time for it are quite contradictory. This is a season where growth is readily available the moment pruning has taken its course.

This is a time where pruning is required in order for us to see new growth in our lives. I have learned to spend time eliminating what is taking my time away from completing projects, or even from having my time of devotion.

I had to stop spending so much time in the living room where distractions were all around me. And instead, I have spent more time in my office. An area where it's peaceful and I can remain focused.

In reading *"Settle My Soul: 100 Quiet Moments To Meet With Jesus"*, by Karen Ehman & Ruth Schwenk, I realized how solitude is as important for others as it is for me. And the solitude and seclusion we face today is extremely important for all of us.



"Solitude is not about withdrawing from people, but withdrawing for people. Jesus withdrew for the sake of reengaging people to love, heal, and bless them."

Quote from *"Settle My Soul"* by Karen Ehman & Ruth Schwenk

I want to encourage you to take this time of seclusion and solitude and embrace it. Use this time to allow healing within the Nations. Healing within your home and life. Embrace Jesus during this time away from the daily routine of chaos and overwhelm. ^



Be Still

Psalm 46:10

grow where you're planted

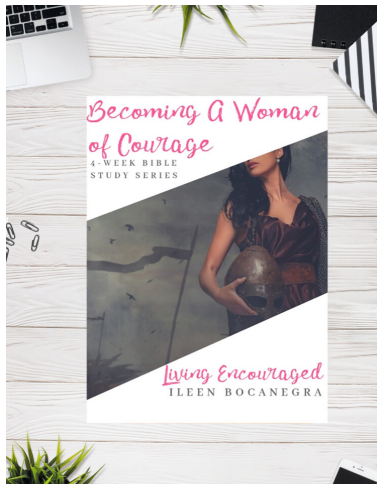
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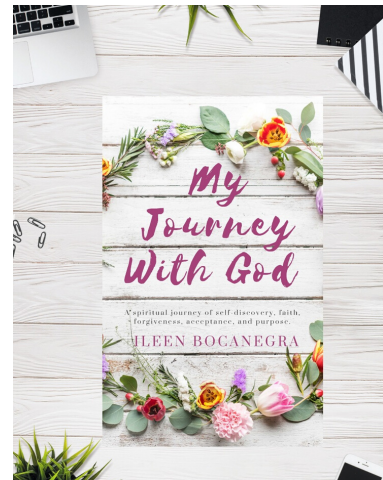


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