



Stuck at home for 12 weeks, but I've been on a journey.

I'm not a believer in superstition. I have broken many mirrors and walked under plenty of ladders, but casting my mind back to Friday 13th March, the announcement was made that the Wales Six Nations match vs Scotland was cancelled due to the Coronavirus and I remember thinking to myself 'OOOF! That does not sound good'.

Twelve weeks has passed since then, and a lot has changed. The terms 'flatten the curve', 'furlough', and 'new normal' have become part of daily household conversation. The COVID-19 crisis has been a huge journey for us all and I myself have experienced the ups and downs throughout.....

My initial thoughts were that home-working would be a jolly - no alarm clocks, no daily travel, and whether I decide to change out of my Super-Ted pyjamas would be a personal choice. However, in reality home-working has been stressful at times. Certainly not what I expected it to be. It has been tough working in a loud and distractive environment that comes from having a one-year old and a four-year-old. Although, I have been blessed by watching them grow, playing games, sharing meals and seeing 'school-time' with them – something I would usually miss out on.

My biggest challenge became apparent in week one. My I.T. skills were poor. The smallest digital task seemed like a mountain for me. I became stressed. Home working was a nightmare. I had no colleagues to call upon for assistance. I was in an unfamiliar setting and I was struggling to tread water. I also realised that I had been too reliant from having help from my colleagues pre-lockdown. I was guilty of having 'learned helplessness'. (sigh).

By week 3, I had 'chipped away' at the digital tasks independently. I learned to battle through my area of weakness and progress was made, albeit very slowly.

By week 5, my confidence had started to grow within the field of I.T., I am proud of myself for solving several problems myself. At this point, home-working started to actually feel like the 'new normal'.

Here we are in week nine of home-working. I am still disappointed I didn't get to see the conclusion of the Six Nations. It feels like life has been temporarily placed 'on hold'. Yet, the priority remains in keeping one another safe. There are obvious physical security measures that we must adhere to, such as washing hands, standing safe distance apart, and wearing suitable PPE. Although, I have noted a greater reliance upon supporting and monitoring mental wellbeing as well. Some of

us do not have the support and companionship of families to rely upon. It is important that social links are maintained and can be done so digitally on Skype, Zoom, Facebook, etc.

As well as learning a couple of nifty I.T. skills, I have learned a valuable life lesson throughout this crisis. This lesson can be applied to many challenges in our lives. - *Initial fears can be conquered and challenges can be overcome through persistence. A 'can do' mind-set and a positive attitude is best remedy for life's hurdles.* [Before you read on, I know the following might seem very 'fluffy' but a lack of confidence can stifle ambition and limit our working potential]. *I believe confidence can be represented as a snowball atop a hill, if you gather some momentum rather than staying in the same spot, then growth is inevitable.*

In closing- 'Don't limit your challenges. Challenge your limits.'

Adam, (bonafide I.T. Whizzkid aged 36.)