

The Third Space

SWITCHING OFF FROM WORK

assureprograms.com.au
1800 808 374 (AU) | 0800 464 387 (NZ)

Do you often think about work at home?

Do you check work emails constantly, even at home?

If you answer yes to one of these questions, you're not alone.

Research suggests an average person living in the year 2020 consumes at least three times more information compared to that of the average person living in the 1960s. Our brain is not designed to consume this much information and as a result of this, the brain can feel overwhelmed at times. Take this for example:

Neuroscience research indicates that when you check your phone for information, you get a “buzz” which includes a little rush of adrenaline (the fight or flight hormone) and dopamine (the “reward” hormone). This explains why these checking behaviours are so addictive. Over time, our brain can experience cognitive overload and the body may experience depletion of certain chemicals that keep us naturally energised.

1



Why is it important to switch off from work?

Today, we are significantly more productive than ever before. However, the “do more, faster” mindset isn’t actually working. In fact, we need to slow down and allow time for our brain to disconnect from the busyness of things and be present in the now.

What is the Third Space?

The concept of the Third Space was coined by Dr Adam Fraser. What he found from his research is that the factor that promotes life satisfaction is the ability to switch off and not let the baggage of what happened in one area of your life to affect the other.

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Imagine that you are on your way from work (1st space) to home (2nd space), in between those, you find the transitional space, called the Third Space. We can use this transition space to consciously switch off and remind ourselves to be present in the next setting we're about to step into.

To get into the Third Space, try the following steps:

Reflect – Make sense of how your day has been so far. What were the three things that went well? What did I achieve? How could I improve? Write down these thoughts into a journal/diary. Discuss these thoughts with your friends/family/colleagues. Try to learn from these reflections such that you will be able to find creative ways for switching off from work. Always be kinder to yourself, your day and what you did at work. Avoid being critical about your day.

2



Rest – Calm your mind by being more conscious of how you breathe. Breathe-in while tensing your muscles (for each breath use different muscles), breathe-out while relaxing same tensed muscles. Do whatever helps you to switch off from work (e.g. walking, yoga).

Reset – Align your mindset with what is about to happen. What is important now? Think about the type of person you would like to be when you walk in the door of your home. In what ways could you enjoy your time?