

A Guide To Working Remotely



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HOME IS WHERE THE WORK IS

Lee Silber

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This book was written, designed, and "edited" by Lee Silber
Photos by and Featuring Evan, Andrea, and Lee Silber

This mini book is dedicated to my wife and sons who are working and learning from home for the first time and making it work—despite my being there, too.

Remote Worker Resource

Training and Support For Remote Workers
www.remoteworkerresource.com

Lee Silber is available for coaching, training, speaking, designing, writing . . . and you can easily reach him at home—working.
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WELCOME REMOTE WORKERS

A Sort of Introduction

A book should always start with something positive—a benefit for the reader—so here goes. You will be far better at working remotely when you read (or even skim) this mini book. And now for a little negativity.

I'm skipping the basic, obvious, and (in my opinion) wrong advice you will find in some of the other books on working from home. There, I said it. (I *will* list the seven things to do when working remotely at the end of this book.)

Instead, this book takes a long look at the things that aren't so obvious and seeks to speak and teach the truth about how to master working when nobody is watching—or when everyone is watching, because you're all home together.

This is written by someone (me) who has been there, done that, and has all the ratty t-shirts to prove it. In my 30 years of working from home I've found creative ways to overcome procrastination, find focus, and achieve balance, and I'm sharing it all with you in this handy little book.

—LEE SILBER



1

COMFORT IS A STATE OF MIND

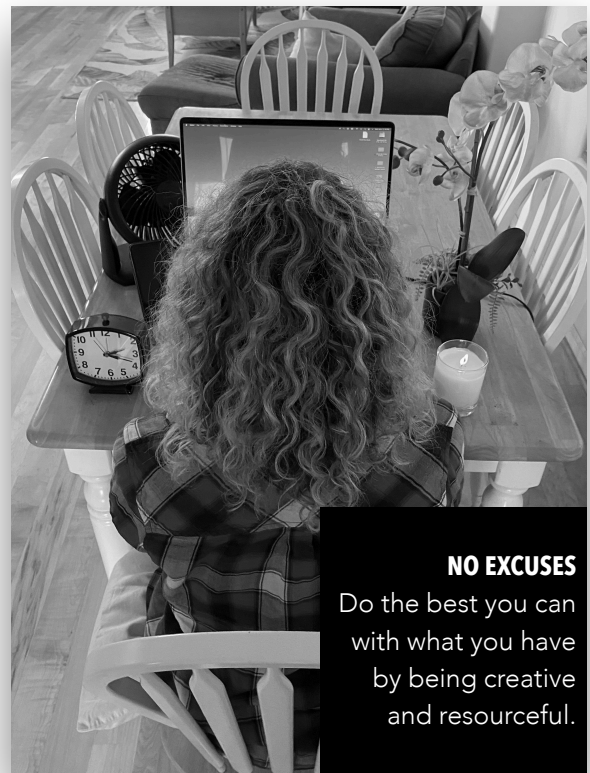
A (Work) World All Your Own

The dream is to have a dedicated home office with a large desk, comfy chair, a window with a view, and a door we can shut . . . and lock.

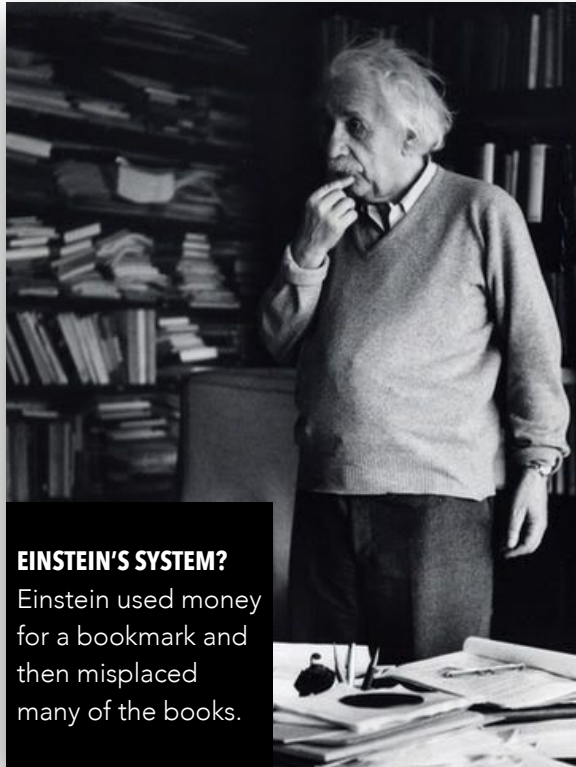
That's the dream. The reality is we may have to create a workspace utilizing the corner of a cluttered dining room table while confined to an uncomfortable wood chair. No window, no door.

My advice, our computer screen is our window to the world, our noise-cancelling headphones our escape from the distractions all around us, and a plush pillow as a buttress for our bu . . . backside. It's not perfect, but it works.

We need to do the best we can with what we have—and then get creative and resourceful. No window, no problem. Plants, good lighting, candles, and a calming screen saver makes a difference. It's crazy how much better we work when we have our headphones on or our ear buds in—anything that allows us to feel like we have a corner office with a view.

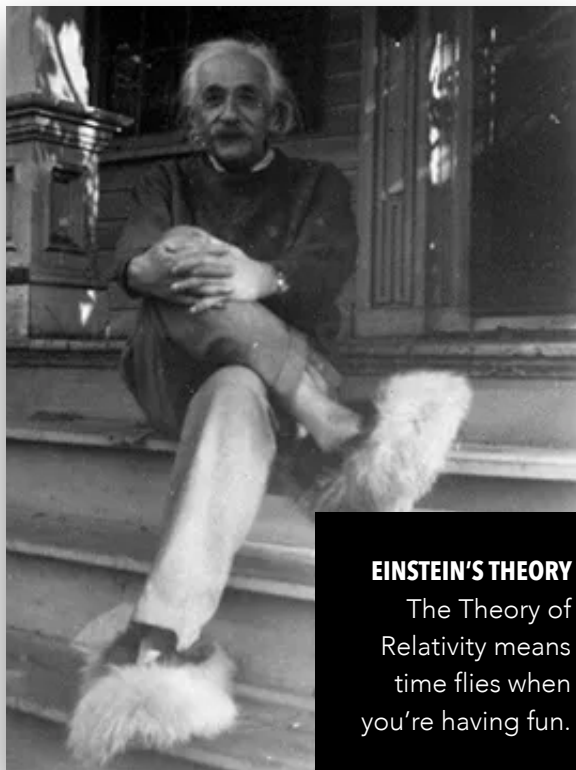
**NO EXCUSES**

Do the best you can
with what you have
by being creative
and resourceful.



EINSTEIN'S SYSTEM?

Einstein used money for a bookmark and then misplaced many of the books.



EINSTEIN'S THEORY

The Theory of Relativity means time flies when you're having fun.

ARE YOU A GENIUS?

Take this quiz to see if you're a genius at working remotely.

1. I PREFER TO PILE VERSUS FILE

I keep current projects and often-used items out where I can see them and get to them easily. I have a unique system to find what I need when I need it—and it works. **T / F**

2. I WILL GOOF OFF AT TIMES

I don't believe in all work and no play. I like to make work fun when I can. I enjoy my job and get into "the zone," working for hours without noticing the time. **T / F**

3. I AM EASILY BORED

I am not afraid of change and will mix up my schedule, find better ways to do things, and I'm open to using new technology. **T / F**

THE MORE TRUE ANSWERS, THE BETTER

1. Have you even seen Einstein's office? Neatness does not equal greatness.
2. The founder of Amazon brags that he spends time goofing off every day.
3. Steve Jobs says the key to creativity is do things differently (daily) to gain new perspectives and thus new ideas.

2

WE'RE WORKING MORE THAN WE THOUGHT

When You Work At Home, You're Always at Work

It surprises people to learn that those who switch to working from home end up working more hours than they used to. However, there can be a positive tradeoff. When we get up early to get a head start, or stay up late to catch up—all so we can spend time in the middle of our day on something important to us (not work related) it's worth it.

When where we work is where we live, we have to adapt. One obvious solution is to set boundaries about how much (and when) we're willing to work—and to track our hours. Another is to do all of our chores during the week so on the weekends we're *freeeeeeeee*.

When our workspace is also the bedroom, it's tricky. This is supposed to be the place we rest and relax. When done for the day, cover your workspace—as if you didn't want your stuff to see what you do when the lights go off.

**PRIME TIME**

Know what time of day you do your best work and schedule appointments with yourself to protect it.



HANDY HOME OFFICE HELPERS

1. **Phone Holder.** For under twenty bucks you can have your hands free and still see and use your phone. Totally worth the money.
2. **Laptop Stand.** This is the perfect solution to raise your laptop up to eye level so others on video conferences aren't looking up your nose.
3. **Desktop Organizers.** Pile or file, if you can find what you need when you need it, you're organized. That said, there are tools to help those of us who prefer to pile.
4. **Charging Station.** Having a designated charging station also means you (usually) know where your stuff is.

FLIP THE SWITCH

When You Are Tech Support, "i.t." Changes Everything

Cheap, fast, and easy, that's how I liked my . . . equipment. Not anymore. When possible, buy the best laptop, router, and accessories you (or your employer) can afford. Quality counts.

If you're like me, when you turn on the lights you don't care how or why they come on, just that they do. That's why I use Apple everything—and have since 1987. Their stuff just works, which simplifies and streamlines things.

When it comes to technology, less is more. Using less applications means there is less to learn and more time to earn. Sticking with equipment that is compatible (and the same brand) often saves time and reduces headaches—and for us OCD types, they match.

Or, keep small and simple household projects handy so you have something productive to do while you're on hold waiting for tech support to pick up.

**IT'S A DOG'S LIFE?**

Technology is like dog lives, one year equals seven. So try leasing instead of buying equipment.

4

MONEY SAVED IS MONEY EARNED

Coffee, Clothing, Commuting, and Home Cookin'

Working from home is saving us a ton of time and money. Not having to commute, eat out, or buy designer clothes can be life—or at the least, lifestyle—changing.

Sure, we now complain about too many virtual meetings, but let's look at the upside. So many people I know often said if they only had more time they would do the things they love—read, write, exercise, and . . . sleep.

If you're like me and *used to* enjoy a Starbuck's drink (or two) every day, that's a thousand bucks a year. I just voted my Mr. Coffee the Employee of the Year. I've learned to love plain coffee . . . and how to cook. The oven is now my timer, reminding me to take a break—and that break includes good, homemade food. (Okay, "good" is a stretch.)

Lastly, I have found that my older, slightly faded clothes look newish on Zoom.

**HEAT AND EAT**

In a hurry? Hormel's
yummy hot sandwich
wraps are ready in
30 seconds.
Seconds!

HOME SCHOOLED

One High School Principal was having a hard time getting boys to sign up for Home Economics until he pitched them on a class called, "Bachelor Living" (the same class).

1. Life Lessons. With my kids learning remotely, I took it upon myself to teach a daily class called, "Lessons with Lee". I've focused on life lessons that aren't taught in school. If you want to give it a go yourself, reach out to me and I'll send you my notes.

2. Bored Games. One of my more popular books was, *Bored Games*. It's full of fun things to do with kids at home and without electronics. A copy is yours if you e-mail me.

3. P. E. Start by doing curls with five-pound potato bags, then put some potatoes in the bags. All kidding aside, our role as parents is to set a good example. Exercising with our kids is effective and fun.



YOU, INC.

You Work For Yourself, Even When You Don't

Now that we work more independently than ever, we should think of ourselves as empoweredpreneurs. I know that's not a real word, but when we think and act like entrepreneurs instead of as employees, it's empowering.

This shift in thinking means we see our employer as a partner or a client, and ourselves as the service provider—which was kinda true anyway—we now can see how helping our employer reach their goals helps us reach ours.

When we're our own boss we focus on efficiency, productivity, and profitability. As a remote worker, the same thing applies. We are efficient and productive by finding creative ways to get things done better and faster. We're profitable by not wasting our time on things that don't matter, and go the extra mile on the things that do matter. I'll add one more word, responsibility. Entrepreneurs don't need to be told what to do, how to do it, or when to do it, they just do it.



DID YOU KNOW?

While working full time, Sara Blakely invented and built her Spanx empire out of her home.

6

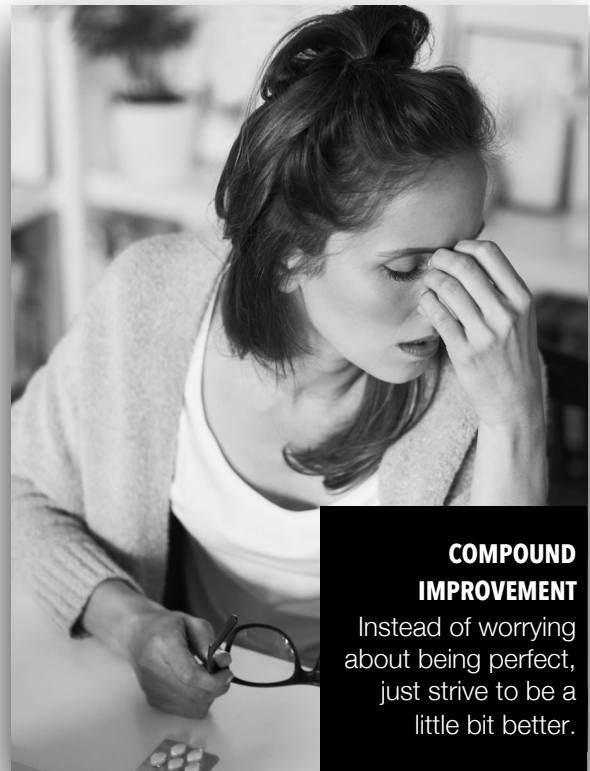
THINK SMALL

Procrastination is a Four-Letter Word

Procrastination is a four-letter word and that word is . . . fear. We often put off doing the important things that need to get done because they are overwhelming (too big to tackle and scary), uncomfortable (new and different than we're used to), difficult (we don't think we can do it), and complicated (we don't know how or where to start). Fear. Which is made worse when we work alone at home.

So what's the answer? For the big things, break them down into tasks that are easy to tackle. For the things that make us uncomfortable, realize it's okay to suck at first, but if we will just take that first step, we'll quickly realize that we can figure it out and build our confidence as we go. For things that are complicated and difficult, start with something easy, or research the heck out of it, or ask for help, or team up.

Fear is a four-letter word, but so is done, and done feels good.

**COMPOUND
IMPROVEMENT**

Instead of worrying about being perfect, just strive to be a little bit better.

7

BEAT YESTERDAY

Goal For It

If you don't set goals for yourself then you are working to help someone else achieve theirs.

Without goals I would not have squat. If I'm being honest, I have overachieved because of my commitment to goal-setting and my unique system. (Which I am sharing for free for those who made it this far in the book). In fact, I'm burying the offer here. Simply e-mail me and in the subject line write, "Goals" and I will e-mail you my *Beat Yesterday Goal Planner*, which is pictured to the right with no caption . . . on purpose. Readers rule.

Now that we work alone, it's critical to have a way to harness our time, talent, and energy so we focus on doing the right things—the things that will get us where we want to go. To me, goals are the map that points the way, the gas that fuels the car, and the auto insurance that gives us the courage to put the car in drive and put the pedal to the metal.



SEVEN THINGS

Things you probably already know by now about working from home.



1. **Keep a mirror** nearby to remember to smile when talking, and to see what others see behind you.
2. **Use a different browser** for work so you're less likely to be distracted.
3. **Pretend you're not home alone**, and then act and dress accordingly.



4. **Build white space into your schedule** so those unexpected emergencies aren't emergencies.
5. **End your day on a high note** by leaving the easy tasks for last.



6. **Fold your things-to-do list in half**—one half for personal, the other for professional tasks. Keep a running list of things to do around the house.
7. **Display reminders** of your past successes.



THE AUTHOR

Lee Silber

For years I wrote books—25 of them—from the comfort of my home office. My happy place . . . especially when my wife left for work and the kids went to school. Then Covid hit.

My wife was forced to work from home and my kids were kicked out of school (because of the virus) and became remote learners. *Then* my book and speaking tours were all cancelled—so now I was home all the time, too.



Jimmy Buffett said, “When life gives you limes, make margaritas.” So, instead of becoming a day drinker, I decided to start a new business—one that would help others like my wife who was working from home for the first time, and also offer advice and insights for people like me—those having to share their office for the first time.

I’m now the proud founder of Remote Worker Resource.



CONTACT US

Stay Connected

My hope is this mini book taught you things you never knew you needed to know about working from home and showed you that someone who has done this for over 25 years is still learning new and better ways to make it work. Let's not let it end here. Here's some ways (and reasons) for us to stay connected.

- Sign up for our FREE Monthly Newsletter
- Visit our Website For FREE Resources
- Join our FREE Online Community

Lee is available for coaching, training, and speaking opportunities of all kinds.

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Training and Supplies For The Remote Worker