

Welcome

The month of March brought a massively impactful unexpected event and, like anything that happens unexpectedly, we've all needed time to process the information and wrap our heads around what happens next. While I went through the week last week, I started to write down all of the questions I was wondering, thoughts I was thinking and challenges people were sharing with me. I felt so many feelings in that first week learning about COVID-19 and experienced anxiety that I hadn't felt in quite some time. There is so much uncertainty around when I will be back to my daily routine. Instead of relying on arbitrary dates that are likely inaccurate, I decided to take control of my own days and establish my "new normal". I reviewed our Creatively Focused 4-step cycle and realized the same cycle applied here!

Since establishing my 'new normal', I've been able to continue feeling the impact of everything happening, but not become paralyzed. I've been able to lead my team, communicate clearly, connect with old friends, and be present in moments I've missed out on in the past. Now, let's be real. I can go from CEO'ing one minute like a total boss to ten minutes later feeling like a complete and utter failure. Then, I remember... that can happen even when COVID-19 isn't around! My family has a schedule that not only supports us during the chaos we're experiencing right now in the world but is also allowing us to fix some things that weren't working so great a few weeks ago. Dinner at the table every night and not in front of the TV? Check!

Developing this guide was a creative outlet in the last week. It was a way for me to remind myself of who I am, where my strengths are, and why I need to be sure to have time in my day to show up that way – everyday. Are you ready to establish your 'new normal'? Let's get started.

You've got this,



Elizabeth Orme
Founder & CEO
Creatively Focused



STEP 1: GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: During a time with limited distractions (yes, this MAY mean waking up before anyone else), complete the following questions. Do not speak with anyone else and truly spill your heart. Put on some good music, get comfortable and take time to really think about each question being asked. If you hold back here, the next steps won't work. Do your best work here and it will serve you well in the future.

1. Write down your average 24 hour day from just a few weeks ago.

Be as detailed as possible and include the times. Stopped for coffee each day? Where and what did you order? Took a walking break? What time?

Morning Routine (Waking Up – Leaving for Work):

Work Routine (Arriving to Work – End of Work Day):

After Work Routine (End of Work Day – Dinnertime):

Evening Routing (Dinnertime – Asleep):



2. **Was there anything in that 24 hour day that didn't serve you well? Was there anything missing from that 24 hour day you wish you'd seen?**

Using a different color pen, cross out the routines that didn't serve you well and write in what you wish you could go back and add.

Commented [CMI]:

3. **What worries you the most about your 'new normal'?**

4. **What are some opportunities/positives that could arise from your 'new normal'?**

5. **What do you anticipate being the biggest challenge for YOU in committing to your 'new normal'?**

6. **What are your non-negotiables? Go back to your 24 hour day and star them.**

These are things that you MUST do in order to maintain your health, mental wellness and responsibilities to your family and/or work.

7. **[IF APPLICABLE] What activities with your kids bring you the most joy?**

If you are completing this activity with a partner, please make sure that person has also had an opportunity in the right space and time to complete their work. Once you are both happy with your responses, schedule a time to connect WITHOUT kids or other distractions around. Then, move onto Step 2





STEP 2: PLAN YOUR 'NEW NORMAL'

INDEPENDENT/WITH PARTNER (IF APPLICABLE): Now you're ready for putting the puzzle together. This is the exciting part. You'll get to think about how you live your day to day life and take full advantage of the fact that your 'new normal' can't look the same as it did a few weeks ago! This is the time and space where you (and your partner, if applicable) are able to think about what will serve you and your family best. Watch your facial reactions, your non-verbal body cues and listen to your gut as you go through this. Your reaction to your planning matters!

1. Summarize the needs of your daily, weekday schedule.

Compile your list of non-negotiables (starred activities).

Add in any items that were missing (different colored pen).

Give a time estimate to every item (ex: Working Out – 45 minutes, Shower – 30 minutes)

*[IF APPLICABLE] Account for kids in this section, as well.

Example:

Partner #1	Partner #2	Kid #1	Kid #2
AM Alone Time	Workout	School Work w/ Help	Learning Activities w/ Help
1 hour	45 minutes	1.5 hours	2 hours
Shower	Shower	School Work w/out Help	Free Play w/ Supervision
30 minutes	30 minutes	3 hours	3 hours
Working Time	Working Time	Free Time	Screen Time
7 hours	8 hours	2 hours	1 hour
		Dance Practice	
		1 hour	

2. Share your worries and opportunities.

Talk about them. Think about how you can support the other person or yourself in addressing the worries and determining opportunities for you and/or your family.

3. Put the puzzle together and build a schedule.

Include detailed timeframes. Minimum: 5 minutes; Maximum: 120 minutes.

[IF APPLICABLE] Consider what activities bring you joy as a parent.





STEP 3: BUILD IN YOUR SUPPORT

INDEPENDENT/WITH PARTNER (IF APPLICABLE): You did it. The schedule is the hardest part! Did you learn something new about yourself and/or your partner? Are you feeling excited, yet? If not, let's hit number one hard in this next section. You are taking control of you. If doing this with a partner, you are a team and you're in it together. You've built your 'new normal' together! What an incredible opportunity to start from scratch versus just falling into everyday life.

1. Address the challenges you expect to face in your 'new normal'.

What could get in the way of you being successful? How likely is that to happen? What can you do now, proactively, to eliminate the possibility of that happening or decrease the impact it could have? This is a great place to ask yourself about where others may need to step up while you take a step down. Or, explore technology that could support you in sticking to your 'new normal'.

2. Brainstorm other conditions or schedules that need to exist in order to be successful at sticking to this routine.

Do you need to start waking up earlier? Staying up later? What will you do to make sure that doesn't disrupt too much sleep? Do certain days present different issues? Where will you be when you are working to minimize disruptions? Where will the other person be?



3. Identify a location to post your 'new normal' schedule and/or hear it.

A lot of people like a shared google calendar, but take it the next level – hang it up where everyone can see it. Adult-friendly version, kid-friendly version. Multiple rooms. Different floors. Thanks for reminding us what's happening next, Alexa!

4. Clear up your expectations with yourself and your partner (if applicable).

What will you do to support each other? What is the best way to communicate when something needs to change? How will you feel if you're sticking to the schedule and the other person isn't? Call it out now. You are a team.

5. Call out existing supports.

Supportive people are all around us. Sit for a few minutes and brainstorm WHO you have in your life and HOW they support you. Now, what does that look like while social distancing? What are some unique ways they can still provide support to you and even enhance your days?





STEP 4: CONFIRM SUCCESS

INDEPENDENTLY/WITH PARTNER [IF APPLICABLE]: It's the weekend. You're a week into your 'new normal'. Take a few minutes to reflect independently on these questions and then talk about them together. Prioritize this. Changes can be made and you're not failing at this if you adjust! Take the weekend to follow NO schedule. Start fresh on Monday with exactly what was in place or with the adjustments you've made. Either way, you've already won.

1. How do you feel?
2. How do you think your partner feels [if applicable]?
3. What supports worked for you this week?
4. Where did you feel it was most challenging to stick with the routine?
5. Were you limited personally or professionally in any area? If so, where? What do you wish it could look like, instead?
6. What are you feeling most optimistic about?



Closing

Congratulations! You've taken an incredible step toward feeling better and more in control of your current state. Your 'new normal' is an opportunity. It is an opportunity to reflect, restore, plan and learn with yourself and, if applicable, your partner. We will all be better to each other, for each other and with each other by you taking this step. I wish you health, smiles and warmth as you begin your 'new normal'.

