

Work in Solitude

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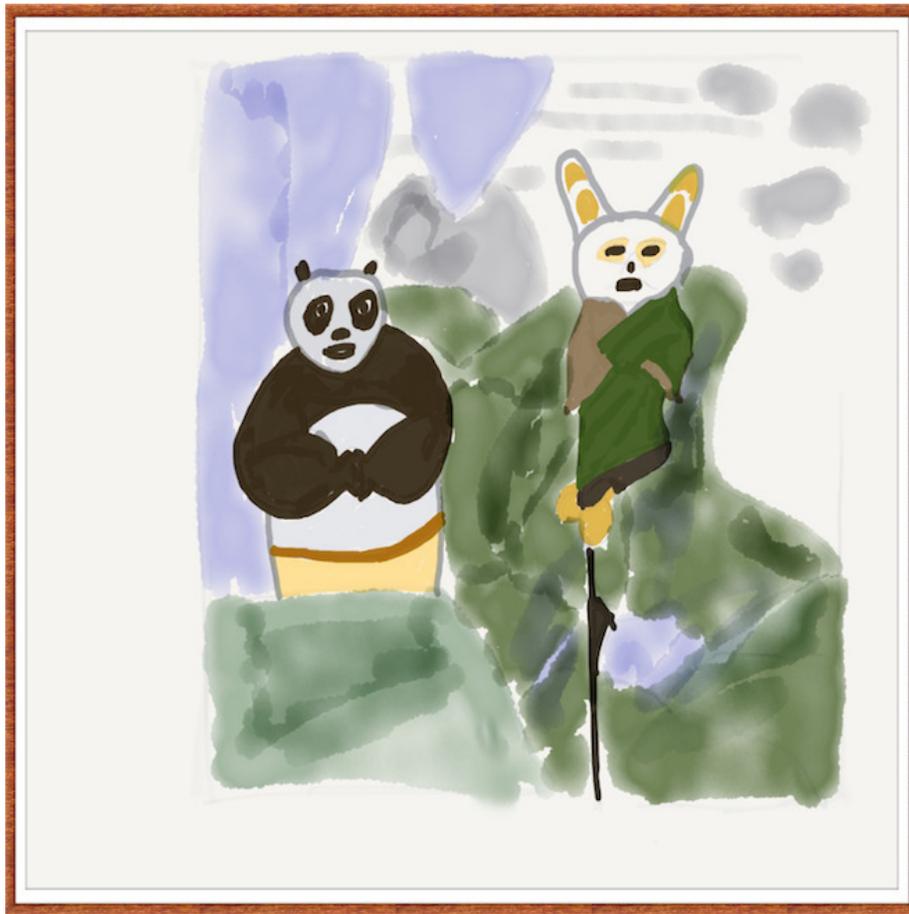


Figure 1:

I am a programmer by profession. For around a year now, I have had the privilege of working from home. Yes, its a privilege, which I think you can avail of only when you have built a niche programming skill set.

I have worked long enough in a cubicle to be able to compare working from home to that in a cubicle. Before I actually worked as I do now if you had asked me, I

would have easily mentioned the following advantages of working from home.

Visible Advantages

- Saving travel time. And if you can save time, it is worth a lot more if you can put that saved time to good use. Of course, if you are lucky enough to have your cubicle within a 3 km radius of where you stay, you still accrue the saved time.
- Saving travel cost. Yes, if you are in India and with fuel prices soaring every other day, even an approximate calculation saves you a lot of money assuming the minimum total travel distance to and fro is at least 20 kms. Now if you are in a big corporate, they may have travel facilities but you lose the flexibility of following your own schedule. In addition, your vehicle undergoes less stress and the consequence is less service charges as well!
- Saving outdoor cost. The moment one steps outside, there will be expenses. Of course it will vary with each person, but nonetheless by working from home, you may not realize that you save these outdoor costs as well. Examples of outdoor costs are impromptu lunches, coffee breaks, impulsive shopping with a colleague etc.

Now if you add these up over a long term period, they will turn out to be significant. These are good to have advantages. But over a period of time, I observed that my work efficiency was to put even conservatively 5x what it was in a cube. I was startled.

Invisible Advantage

I had not done anything special before embarking upon working from home and it suddenly dawned upon me that I was completely shielded from unnecessary distractions of a cubicled workplace. If you have worked in a cubicle, I need not cite examples of such distractions; but for the sake of some enthusiastic programmer out there; I will cite a few. Uncalled for meetings, false alarm driven panic and inconsequential interventions which is labeled as 'behavior of a team man', supplementary work such as 'trainings [both conducting and attending], the stupid HR parties, the list is endless :-).

While working from home, I observed and noted carefully that all my communications were centered only around my work and responsibilities. All other distractions just faded into thin air. And I realized that I was actually not working from home, but working in solitude. Solitude enables productivity, uncluttered thinking and the result is intrinsic joy.

So what are you waiting for? Go find your solitude for work.

Recommended Reading

- Makers Schedule, Manager's Schedule
- Disconnecting Distraction