**To start a virtual assistant business or not**

It sounds great, work from home and spend more time with the family and still earn an income. It is great, but it’s hard hard work.

Remember virtual assistants need to actually work to earn their money, so there’s no lounging around watching TV or saying to yourself I’ll just do the housework and then get on with some work later. Or I’ll play with the kids or go out shopping, just because I work from home. You can certainly do those things, but you must allocate work time throughout your day.

And explain to your partner that just because you work from home it doesn’t mean that the house can be immaculate or a great meal can be served at dinner time; you do work from home remember. This is still something my husband is coming to grips with after 4 years.

You need dedication and a drive to actually work. You no longer have a boss breathing down your neck making sure you actually do any work. You are your only motivator to get on with any paid work. Gone are the days that you turned up to your office, put in minimum effort, got paid to chat to colleagues, had coffee breaks, went out to do your banking, surfed the net, talked on the phone. No those days are over, you no longer get paid to do no work, you only get paid when you actually sit down and do some work.

And remember there is unpaid work as well being a virtual assistant. You have to spend time on your accounting, preparing invoices and billing clients, banking, all sorts of unpaid work and this time adds up.

So if you are not highly motivated, this job is not for you. If you are thinking about working from home as a virtual assistant you have to have the drive to find clients, serve those clients appropriately and to the best of your ability.

I will never forget the secretary sitting next to me in my office job years ago whinging because her boss asked her to type a fax up for him. She said gosh you’d think he could have done that himself. What the? She didn’t like being told what to do. Well you know what, as a virtual assistant you will be taking instructions from lots of different clients, not just the one person. And you have to develop a customer service mentality and realize that it’s your job to free up your client from such administrative tasks so he can get on with growing his business.

But you know what I wouldn’t change it for the world. I may work weird hours into the night and grab time during the weekends whenever I can, slip into my office whilst my husband plays with the kids after dinner, etc, but this is the job for me. I now do the school drop offs, see my kids much more and am there for them much more. I can work in my office and can talk to my son in the next room playing on his playstation and I can grab that glass of milk for him as well.

And the biggest benefit is you no longer have to make coffee for clients and business meetings ever again. That is one job that a virtual assistant simply cannot do!!

**Sandra Fraser is a virtual assistant and also creator of http://www.virtual-assistant-advice.com which is an information site for WAHMs, prospective and existing virtual assistants and for those wishing to find a VA.**