

THE ART OF

ZOOM-VERSATION

HELPFUL IDEAS FROM *FRIDAY GOODY BAG*

When the pandemic started, Zoom seemed like a godsend. Then we began to learn the basics, such as *Always wear pants*. Now that people have mastered the tool, you hear a lot of moaning and groaning about Zoom. *Friday Goody Bag* comes to the rescue with a few tips to make Zoom meetings easier.

ZOOM FATIGUE

Zoom fatigue occurs when you are simply stuck in one place, staring at people on the screen too much. To mitigate it:

- **Try standing up.** If you typically sit down to work, use a standing desk or a stack of books and make sure you are standing during your meetings.
- **Hide “self view.”** You might think that seeing yourself will help you avoid catastrophes like wardrobe malfunctions. Actually it's extra tiring — it takes more energy to watch yourself while also paying attention to the meeting. Do yourself a favor, Narcissus — turn it off.

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO SAY

Does conversation drag during unstructured social times? Create a list of questions that you can ask others when conversation is flagging or one person isn't speaking up.

A few sample topics:

- **Difficulty.** What challenged you this week?
- **Change.** What has changed for you due to the pandemic? Positive? Negative?
- **Commonalty challenge.** Can you think of something you have in common with people whose political views are opposite to yours?

- **Food.** What's for dinner tonight?
- **Pride.** What's something you're proud of that very few people know about you?

RESPECT

If one person starts disrespecting a meeting, others are likely to follow. To keep your meetings more productive:

- **Be courteous.** Arrive on time and dress for the occasion.
- **Remember you're on camera.** Don't eat, pick your teeth, multitask, or take your clothes off for any reason! (This includes Googling — people can tell.)
- **Hush.** Mute yourself when not speaking.
- **Don't hog the mic.** Make sure you allow others to get a word in edgewise.

WHEN GOOD MEETINGS GO BAD

Do your meetings seem unproductive? Is one person monopolizing them? Don't be afraid to suggest changing the format of a meeting that has started to fail. It may help to:

- **Reschedule.** Change the start time or length. Or cancel the meeting altogether — new ways of working and living may have eliminated the need for some standing meetings.
- **Add or remove structure** (“Let's go around the room...”)
- **Remind people of the format** (“We agreed to share ONE success story...”)
- **Stretch.** Add a 60-second break.
- **Mercy Rule.** End 5 or 10 minutes early.