

CASE STUDY

Using dialoguing to adjust to new work-life balance

The brief

To work with Annie to help her to adjust to new ways of working as a freelance editor, alongside her novel writing. The challenge Annie was facing was to find time to prioritise her novel writing over paid work as it came in, often without warning.

Our work together

Annie is an extremely efficient person who has a lot of structure and previously had a regular job which also gave her structure. The challenge for Annie wasn't to be disciplined, to have routines, etc. It was to feel that she could justify and feel good about spending time writing her third and fourth novel when paid work could challenge the time she might have planned.

Annie has a bear called Stanley who she has often referred to when we've worked together. He's very large, life sized almost, and is with her during all her work and writing at home. I've had Annie write from Stanley to lend his wisdom to various situations and this works well. It's clear that Stanley the bear is her wiser, calmer self and can sooth her worries, remind her to breathe and to be calm.

Annie also mentioned her 'sub-conscious' crew during our work together. This is how she refers to the stuff that goes on in the background when she's not actively working on something. Her creativity percolating if you like. We expanded the metaphor and I asked who else was on the ship? Annie talked about Detail-Oriented Debbie who would wander around with a clip board in a pair of court shoes making sure work was getting done and lists were being ticked.

Outcomes

By acknowledging and addressing, even negotiating with these aspects, Annie was able to re-balance how she spent her time. Giving Debbie certain tasks to do at certain times and making sure her sub-conscious crew were feeling acknowledged and valued. It helped her to move forward with her next two novels. She even brought a little wooden ship to remind her they were there.

Feedback from Annie

"Claire provides a wonderfully encouraging and supportive space to explore mental barriers. Her coaching always leads me to unexpected and really useful revelations and this occasion was no exception. My mind ship is now running smoothly and every member of the crew is in harmony."

