

Take on Board Podcast – Episode 257

Transcript – Making Space for S.P.A.C.E



Helga Svendsen 0:00

Hello people have the Take on Board community, it's coming into the end of June, which is the end of financial year here in Australia. And sometimes not a bad time to just do a little mid-year reflection. So that's what I'm doing for you all with you as the case may be.

So many of you will know from the final episode of 2023, that I always do my RSVP process that is Reflect, Identify Superpowers, think about Values, and then set your Purpose. So for me, the theme for 2024 was about SPACE, leaving space in the cup; space to grow space to learn and space to be. Just to recap, here's some edited highlights from my 2023 RSVP statement.

I said, in the past year, I noticed that my cup is full, which is awesome. Although sometimes a little too full. I noticed that I really love the variety of my work and the people that I work with. And I noticed that I managed to do things like have a holiday, become a foster carer, mentor on a YWCA, Asista program. So I feel like I've got to do loads of stuff, and loads of different stuff, which is fabulous and fun. I also noticed that my word for 2022, which was EASE worked really well. But it wasn't enough to ensure that my cup didn't overflow. So I didn't get to do some of the things that were on my list, like building strength and flexibility. Now sure, that's possibly because I didn't have the motivation to do it. And I just made excuses. But for whatever reason, I didn't get to it.

Step two in the RSVP process is superpowers. My superpower is that connecting, bringing people together, listening and creating space for people and groups to think and to thrive. Community Building.

Step three is around values. And for me, that is really around making a difference, which is always number one for me. And one of my key values is also around love, which when I thought about it at the end of 2023, I tweaked that into self compassion. So bringing it all together. And noting again, that I said this at the end of 2023. My word for this year for 2024 is space, I want to leave space, I don't want to think about it, like creating space or making space, I actually need to leave space for me and some of the things that are really key for me. So some of the more concrete things that I

might do to leave that space in the cup. I'll explore my relationship with busyness quite like being busy, maybe a little bit too much. So we'll explore what that means. And some of the practical things I might do include using the Pomodoro method, at least for a couple of weeks, just so I can really focus on what I'm doing and what I'm not doing. And that might help me focus on doing one thing at a time. And I might even engage my own executive leadership coach to help me through this relationship with business.

So folks, that's what I said I would do at the end of 2023, coming into 2024. So I thought I would do a little check in on where I'm at. So how do I go? The practical things that I said I would put in place to help me leave space were to use the Pomodoro method for productivity and to engage a coach for accountability. I've done both of those things. And they've both worked beautifully well. I spent a few weeks faithfully Pomodoroing if that's a word Pomodoro in my time and realizing that you can achieve a lot when you focus on just one thing at a time. Let me take a step back, I should explain what Pomodoro is for those that haven't used it before. The Pomodoro method is where essentially you break your day into half hour lots 25 minutes Sprint's of getting stuff done, and then a five minute break. And then another 25 minutes sprint of getting stuff done. And a five minute break. You build in some longer breaks as well. But that's essentially the Pomodoro method. So as I say, I kind of tracked that. And my aim was to do 16 Pomodoro rows a day. On Sundays I did achieve that. Although I did notice that when you do that, a couple of things. One, at the end of the day, you're really tired because you have been productive every moment of the day. And to be honest, I don't know if this is everybody, but for me, most people are not productive that often. So doing it all the time is very tiring. The other thing I noticed when I faithfully tracked was that sometimes things that I thought would just take 1x 25 minutes sprint took two or three or even more. Now that was super useful for me because it meant that I could be much more realistic about the space I need to get stuff done and also a bit more realistic about making sure I took my five minute breaks or my longer breaks, because sometimes I just kept sprinting. And I think that's when I got really tired at the end of the day.

The second thing that I said I would do was to engage a coach to help keep me accountable in leaving space. And I have done that. I've had a couple of coaching sessions this year, which is really great for me as a coach to have my own coach, partly I get to observe how other coaches do their work. And partly, it gives me the space to reflect, I think it's fair to say that I haven't always been the best client, I've often changed my appointments. But a couple of sessions that I've done have really helped me to reflect on what I have done, and what's worked, and what I need to tweak. And most importantly, what I need to do next. So just as all good coaching sessions should do, they have helped me to reflect and be accountable and set my goals. Having said that, so I did a couple of things. But I didn't always feel like I had that flow in that space that I was looking for looking to achieve for 2024. So I did some more thinking some more reflecting some more pondering, and I realized a couple of things. Firstly, as I did in my reflection at the end of 2023, I am really fortunate to be in a position of really adoring my work, I love it. I love the connections that I make. I love the organisations that I work with all of the people that I work with. It's just fabulous. So that means saying no to people to clients is really hard for me. Everything sounds so fun to be involved in. So I

always say yes, when I can. That means that I sometimes start the day quite early, I sometimes finish quite late and work when I was gonna say sometimes, but let's be honest, it regularly leaks into the weekends. So I guess in some ways, what I've realized when I really reflected on this is that that's a good problem to have, that I'm so engaged in my work that I enjoy it so much, it's a good problem to have. It doesn't help me in creating that space. But it's a good problem to have. So I thought a workaround isn't required. So my workaround is this. Whilst I love my work, while it regularly eats into my own time, I guess on the flip side, I'm pretty good at blocking time for holidays.

At the start of each year, I map out my year, and I block out at least a three week block at least once, sometimes a wee bit more. So I reflected, what if I just blocked out extra time? What if I worked hard when I'm working hard, but then take the space around that. So that's what I did. There are a few weeks in June when you're listening to this when I didn't have much locked in. So I just blocked it out. By the time you're listening to this, I am hoping that I am roaming Noosa National Park having a lovely little break out there. Doing lots of hiking, doing a bit of Pilates. See building that strength and flexibility, maybe even doing a bit of yoga, and really just relaxing up in the beautiful Queensland warmth in winter. I know Queenslanders don't think it warm, it's warm. But for those of us in Victoria, we think it is. So I've blocked it out. And that's worked a treat. I felt able to say no to clients, when I had blocked out time, I was able to either say to them, you need to wait till July which quite frankly, most of them have done or for some really urgent pieces of work, I've been able to send it on to some really excellent colleagues.

So my next experiment with leaving space is just to take more holidays. The second thing I've done or perhaps more accurately documented, is come up with some principles that have stood me in good stead over the years in keeping some semblance of balance, some semblance of leaving space in the cup. So I thought it might be valuable to share that framework with you introducing space for more space.

So S is for silo your time. P is for plan something. A is for accountability. C is for celebrate, and E is for Echo. Let me take you through each of those.

S silo your time. Now I've done a couple of different experiments with this. Many years ago, I remember putting into my diary, I think it was on a Wednesday night do nothing. Because I knew that if I didn't have do nothing slotted into my calendar, then it would just fill up with other things with catch ups with events, gym classes, whatever it might be. You can tell it was a few years ago because gym classes was one of the things that you still eat into that space. So that helped me for each Wednesday to do nothing, it didn't always happen on a Wednesday, but I would move that space in my calendar to a different time if something ended up being on. Now, these days, I'm not sure that would work so well for me. As I've just shared for me at the moment, it's about blocking out time for breaks. Even though as a work for myself person, I often do bits and bobs of work when

I am on leave, it's not the same as being in the office every day. And having that space for a break. That space in the cup allows me time to think rest and recharge.

P is for planning, planning something for me, I need to put something in there. As I say, hopefully I'm up in Noosa. As this goes to air, which was my plan something to get away. If I don't plan something to get away, or even just some activities, then I often rely on old habits, which means business as usual. So plan a holiday plan to go to the movies plan to go for a walk plan to catch up with somebody, plan something so that you don't just revert to their business as usual. You might even just plan to do nothing, read a book, sit on the couch, watch something, whatever it may be, but plan something so you don't just fritter away your time. With Well, the things that sometimes we end up preferring, for me, sometimes I end up down the social media vortex. So having a plan, or even better tickets booked for a holiday works best for me.

A is for accountability. As I say, for me, this was engaging a coach, you don't have to do that that might be something you do, but it might not be. So just think about ways for accountability. Again, putting this out on the podcast is partly the accountability to make sure that I'm taking the break, you might engage a friend to give you some of that accountability, or a mentor or a coach, or family or friends. Just whatever it might be that helps you to be accountable for the space that you are trying to leave for yourself.

C is for celebrate, reward yourself. Not just with the break that you're taking, or the space that you are leaving, but some other way of really rewarding yourself for that alignment to your goals. So on my upcoming trip, the one that I'm hopefully on, as you listen to this, I'm just going to take a moment each day to celebrate, it might just be looking out from the Noosa lookout it might be taking a moment before I get out of bed or as I go to bed. But celebrating that I have aligned my activities with my goals

E is echo. Echo means do it all over again. Once you've done that, that thing, whatever it may be, for me it's leaving space. Once you've taken that space, make sure that you are also making the plans to do it all over again.

So that is my framework for space for space, Silo your time, plan something, find some accountability, celebrate and echo. Hopefully that's what I'm doing right now as you listen to this. And I hope that that framework helps you to align your activities to your own space as well. I am going to post this as a blog on my website. So if you've missed all of this, make sure you have a look there we'll put a link in the show notes. But as always, if you're out walking in Noosa National Park or elsewhere, feel free to just go to my website and you'll find it as a blog. I would also love to hear how you live space or how your RSVP statements are going for the year. That's it from me this week.

It's a short and sweet one. Hope you're leaving some space making some space creating some space. And I would love to hear how you're going. Thanks, folks. See you on the other side. That is next week. Thanks again. Ciao.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>