

A Day in the Life of

an Online Coach

by Diane Parker



A typical day in my working week would depend on what day of the week you caught me. At the moment, as well as running my private coaching practice, I am studying for a Masters degree in dance movement psychotherapy and I also edit the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's Coaching Division](#) journal, *Coaching Today*.

During term-time, I attend college two days per week and then a further day on clinical placement. Those days can be fairly intense, so I try as much as I can to carve out space around those days and keep them clear of other work, e.g. client sessions and consultations or work on the journal, though of course that's not always possible.

My own professional background is in the arts (I was originally a dancer) and my coaching training was accredited by Performance Coach Training through the Cultural Leadership Programme, so I specialise in creative and cultural industry leadership coaching. Many of my clients, like me, have creative portfolio careers, the majority are self-employed or freelance and are juggling creative/artistic work with other, more 'mainstream' work. Because I also work with the body, on a deep somatic level, I am also rapidly developing another client stream, working in the area of sexuality, spirituality and intimate relationships. Sometimes, the two overlap, which is having an impact on how I market myself, as the boundaries between 'business' and 'pleasure' become increasingly blurred.

I rely heavily on the Internet

and social media to reach my audience. In addition to my website, I also have a Facebook page and a Twitter account for my business, The Good Witch of the North. I also have a Facebook profile, a Twitter account and a private blog as my alter ego Ruby Slippers, where I post and share content related to sexuality and relationships. Often, I will share content across both sites/accounts. I also regularly contribute to an online forum on sex and relationships.

On a day when I am not in college or in placement, I will typically be up and at my desk by 8.30am, with hot black coffee, albeit still in my pyjamas! I first log into my work email account, closely followed by Facebook and Twitter. Because I work at home, in isolation, social media for me serves a similar purpose as the 'office gossip round the watercooler' – some of that 'gossip' may be more work-related than other, but I tend not to make such a differentiation these days. I'm a member of various groups on Facebook so as well as sharing content on my personal profile and business page, I may contribute to a discussion thread or two. I'll then attend to any journal-related correspondence for a couple of hours. It's also

on these days that I take any client consultations, so I may have a half hour telephone conversation with a prospective client. I also have regular dual supervision over Skype for an hour per month, which works brilliantly – using audio only, I and my fellow supervisee can have a three-way conversation with our supervisor. I'll then continue on into the afternoon, working on the journal, dealing with professional correspondence and conducting research, and will typically down tools around 5.30pm, unless I have a client in the evening. Most of my client sessions at the moment are conducted by telephone, though I have seen clients here at home, working face-to-face.

Both modalities have their advantages and drawbacks. The most obvious advantage when I am working on the phone is that I don't have to worry too much about how 'presentable' either I am or my flat is! Having said that, even before a telephone client, I take time to prepare by hoovering and tidying the room in which I work. That may sound a little weird but this helps me to 'hold space' for the client, as I find too much mess distracting. I also take a few moments to centre myself with some deep breathing, yoga or mindfulness

meditation. I've usually spent the majority of the day hunched over my computer screen, so it's important that I get back into my body before working with my client, even if all I have time for is a few minutes just lying down on the floor, reconnecting with my body and the earth. I use a lot of imagery in my work with clients, and often draw their attention to their bodies and their senses, so it's important that I am embodied myself, and in touch with my own senses.

The main focus of my work is to help others reconnect with their sense of home; home

being a place of centredness and fulfilment with oneself, living in alignment with one's own core values and beliefs, a strong inner core that remains constant regardless of what may be happening around us. It's that place that we tend to lose when our world is in turmoil, when we experience fear, uncertainty and self-doubt, and we can easily forget that we always knew the way to get back there. Sometimes, we just need a gentle reminder, and a helping hand to guide us homeward. So whether I am offering creative leadership, career or personal coaching as The Good Witch of the

North, or sex and relationship coaching as my alter ego Ruby Slippers, at its heart, my motivation is the same. To help others find their way home to their authentic, true selves, and to live, love, work and play from that centre.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DIANE PARKER is a creative leadership coach and facilitator, a writer and editor, and a trainee dance movement psychotherapist. She lives in London with her cat, her computer and lots of books.

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My name is Diane Parker, and when people ask me what I do, I describe myself as a creative coach and facilitator.

Not surprisingly, the next question is usually 'what's that mean?' Most people get the coaching label, but don't quite understand why I preface it with 'creative'.

I've worked in the creative industries for almost twenty years now, so in common with most creative professionals, I'm used to having to explain what I do. Creative people usually wear many different hats, and have a number of strings to their bow.

In short, I am a qualified coach and facilitator, a professional writer and editor, and I have a background in the performing arts. I started out as a dancer and moved into publishing about ten years ago. I still perform occasionally on London's comedy improv circuit, and I bring elements of improvisation to my coaching practice.