



NEWSLETTER 12: SARAH BROSCOMBE, Oct 2020- March 2021



Liminality is the word for this chapter, I think. And those of us who thrive in liminal spaces are definitely having it easiest.

Sixth year of freelance completed - and there is still no "new normal" on the horizon. The world (and my work) is in flux. Pandemic Life has been good to us: I'm acutely aware what a rare privilege that is.

Sarah Broscombe

HIGHLIGHTS

These six months have been more varied than expected, even though, predictably, the majority of my work has been online 1-2-1 sessions. I guided people through three online retreats (two for St. Beuno's, and one bespoke individual 8-day retreat). I facilitated online events for three groups; the leadership team of a UK NGO, a 2-part facilitation event for a (strikingly positive despite their incredibly adverse climate) Human Rights NGO, and ongoing process facilitation with an order of Religious Sisters, who are an absolute delight to work with.

Not all of the 1-2-1 sessions have been coaching -

I've debriefed a large set of Leadership profile reports with a training cohort due to begin training together in October 2021 (COVID situation permitting). These are absorbing, ninety-minute individual sessions. It's a distinctive and special kind of one-off coaching conversation, supporting serving leaders in education, many of whom get very little support or breathing space in their role.

In contrast, it was very special to have a Zoom reunion with the 2015-2017 leadership programme I described in such loving detail in earlier newsletters.



Coaching and ongoing accompaniment have become my daily bread. I continue to find them profoundly life-giving.

MILESTONES

1) Fellow Coach. I have risen to the quaintly titled dignity of "Fellow Coach" with BetterUp, and have also made it through their rigorous Group

Coaching recruitment, so I'm looking forward to counterweighting my 1-2-1 work with regular small-group interaction, but as a coach rather than a trainer.

NON-VITAL STATISTICS

Formal 1:1 sessions logged **1345**



43 Clients served

Types of Client:

Coaching	28
Spirituality	6
facilitation	5
consultancy	4

Client nationalities



2) Capacity. I expanded my usual maximum of twenty clients on my 1-2-1 roster, peaking at 24. With the leadership debriefs running alongside, this felt pretty intense, but somehow fitting for pandemic season.

3) Money. Bizarrely, this has been my best-remunerated year to date. That's mainly because most of the training work I used to do involves a lot



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of unpaid design & preparation time. (For three years in a row, 44% of my working time was spent pro bono, most of that in design and preparation work. In addition, in the charity and faith sectors, this often comes with a side-commentary about how expensive you are, which can feel like a rather galling double bind). This year, working with employers like BetterUp has been a revelation, because they value all of the time I spend for them, visible or invisible. For them, this is a justice issue, and a demonstration of respect. My pro bono time now is nearly all spent coaching humanitarians, and in worthwhile, refreshing peer networking.



WHAT I'M LEARNING

1) Balance. I thought I would miss big-group work more than I do. In my experience, 1-2-1 connection suffers less from being online than big-group connection does. It will be interesting to see

whether I feel differently about the balance shift towards 1-2-1 when face-to-face work resumes.

2) Lockdown. The first two lockdowns, and even full quarantine in December on moving countries, weren't burdensome. By contrast, this year I've found the long strict Portuguese lockdown (no meeting with others, even outside; restriction to your small local area for days or weeks; duty of confinement at home apart from daily exercise or essential shopping or medical errands) increasingly wearing. I've been feeling genuinely confined; cabin fever with shades of the prison house. So I set up a Weekend Photo Challenge with a friend, and it's been a most refreshing antidote. It's also revived some old bonds (including a Colorado-based primary school friend!) and planted the seeds of some new local friendships too.



3) Acceptance. I am less scared of failing. I dare more. I see my flaws more clearly, and with a lighter heart. I am more reconciled to imperfection in all its forms. I feel the fear and do it anyway.

WHAT'S NEXT

As the pandemic continues evolving, and our attention moves from "How can we get through this?" to "What will we do once lockdown eases/ we've all had our vaccines?", there are many choices ahead. Oddly, I've quite relished the limited choice of this period; work self-selects because most of it is cancelled! Coaching online is proliferating, and fortunately for me, I love it. Soon, face-to-face work will resume, and there will be hard choices to make between the good and the better. The ecological ethics of all that globetrotting need my attention. It's more than that though. My work centre of gravity has shifted; my personal centre of gravity has too. (And home influences that of course- the top right image on each page is our village, Olho Marinho).

Actual face to face work? Allegedly ...! I'm booked in for face-to-face retreats at two different centres this summer, followed by a 3-day facilitation. But since I'm now fully cognisant that I'm not clairvoyant, I shan't take it as 'HAPPENING' until I make it there and the first event actually begins!

Take great care of yourselves, my dear friends and peers. I look forward to the day when I actually see you again, in the flesh, big as life.

Thank you for reading
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