Making The Most Of Habits, Rituals And Defined Spaces (69)

I’ve been (mostly) off-line this last week dealing with the aftermath of my stepmother’s unexpected passing.

As anyone who has dealt with the loss of a parent can appreciate, there were lots of emotions and sheer volume of “things to be done”.

It wasn’t all sadness by any means—I was grateful for the village of people who loved her and was enveloped by their warmth. It was like being in an alternate universe for a week (one that conspired to keep me away from my usual routines).

It started with her Wi-Fi password which will forever remain a secret. None of us felt like dealing with this, so I lived on my iphone hotspot, running to her BFF’s house on Day 1 when I needed enough bandwidth to make a video call.

After that call, it was like time slowed down and nothing existed but the gargantuan tasks ahead of us.

Since we had only a week to give her a proper send-off and sort through the important things—there was tremendous time pressure, which completely disrupted my usual habits, rituals and defined spaces for doing certain things.

And not in the good, vacation-y way where you’re de-compressing.

If I’d held myself to my usual content production standard, I’d have failed miserably (and felt bad about it to boot). Instead, I decided to fully commit to my environment and create a new, temporary “normal”.

Surprisingly (‘cause I do like my rituals), letting go was exactly what I needed. Our little team got a ton of stuff done and more importantly, we honored the life of someone we all loved and admired.

But literally the moment I left that universe, the old familiar habits and rituals re-asserted themselves. I started returning emails, catching up with what’s been going on in my little world plus the rest of the universe.

Today, I’m sitting in my usual spot with my laptop—post-meditation—writing out this email and it’s flowing like it usually does (I confess I was wondering how it would go).

The moral of this story? The more you embed good habits, rituals and (perhaps) defined spaces into how you work, the easier it is to jump back in should life take you off the rails for a bit.