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Should you make a long-term case for continuing to work from home?

You've always wanted to work from home. Well now—like just about everyone else—you're doing it. Maybe you're finding that telecommuting is not for you. Or maybe you're discovering it's everything you thought it would be and more. You love avoiding the commute, making your own hours, and working in your sweats. And as it turns out, you're getting just as much done—if not more—as you were in the office. So, you begin to think, "why not make this arrangement permanent?" Should you try to convince your boss telecommuting should be your permanent gig? Here are some issues to consider before making a case for continuing to work from home even after it's safe to go back to the office.

The social aspect

Once the coronavirus crisis has passed, many people will be eager to get back to the office and once again be surrounded by their coworkers. But not you. You prefer the solitude. At least for now. But how long will it be be-

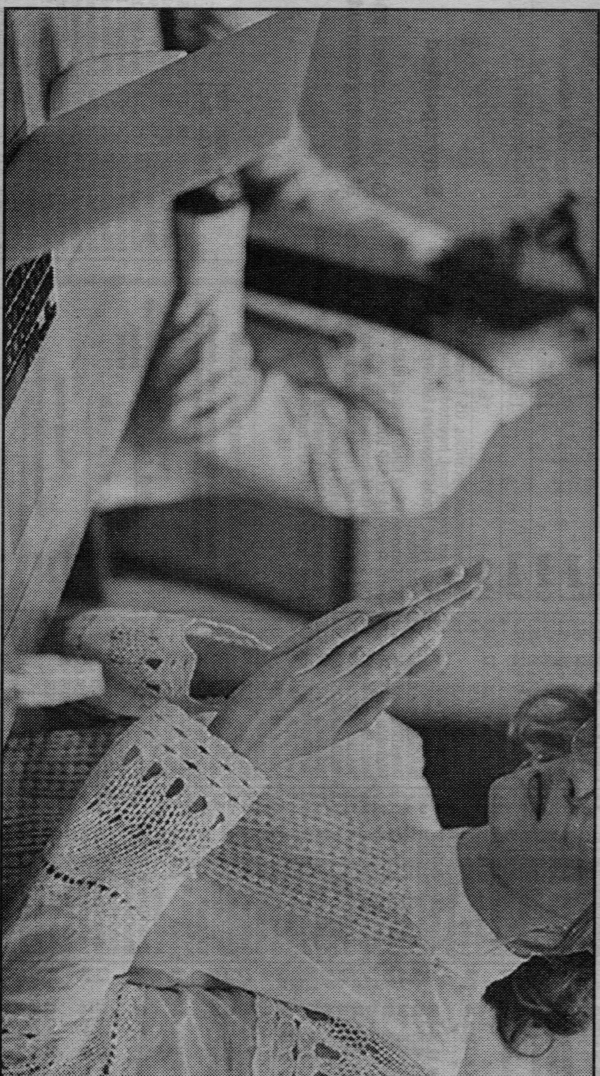
fore you start longing to be back in the thick of things? Will you miss the office birthday parties? The heated brainstorming sessions? Or is all that interaction one of the main reasons you want to avoid going back to the office in the first place? You need to ask yourself these questions and provide yourself with honest.

The productivity factor

In order to be productive working from home, you need to have self-discipline. If you find you're easily distracted by the latest Ellen episode, or the neighbors arguing, or a piece of dust floating through the air, telecommuting might not be for you. The last thing you want is to find out your productivity has gone down since you started working from home, and your boss really regrets the situation. This could end up making you a non-essential employee on a permanent basis rather than a temporary one. So, while you're being forced to quarantine during the pandemic, pay careful attention to your work habits, productivity levels and creative thinking. If any of these are suffering in your relaxed environment, you may want to reconsider making pajamas your dress-for-success staple.

The backfire element

If most of your coworkers are excited about getting back to the office, and you're the one person who doesn't seem to share their enthusiasm, this could be taken the wrong way. If word spreads you're trying to turn your job into a remote working opportunity, people could make the wrong conclusion about whether or not you're willing to be a team player. If you're



successful at pleading your case, and you do end up working from home, it's not that big of a deal. However, if your boss declines your request and you end up back at the office anyway, you might have a lot of explaining to do. So, before you approach your boss with this life-altering request, try to get a feel for how she perceives telecommuting. She may be all for it and say she's been planning to expand the remote workforce for a long time. Or she may look at it as a way to shirk responsibility (despite evidence that shows teleworkers are often more productive than on-site workers).

Taking stock of your boss's attitude toward remote work will help you decide if it's worth taking the risk to ask for a permanent change.

Whether you dreaded adhering to the work-

at-home order, or embraced it from day one, the fact is, no one knows how they will react to telecommuting until they actually experience it. If you're one of those people who finds working at home preferable to going to the office, you'll have a big decision to make when the coronavirus finally subsides. If you feel confident in your abilities to continue working from your home, then by all means, talk to your boss about it. Just make sure you've taken all of the pros and cons into consideration before turning your temporary situation into a long-term one.

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