



INSIGHT

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THE DIARY OF A WORKING MOM

Date: Wednesday, 23 July

Place: Somewhere between sanity and Sandton

06:03

Was woken up by a tiny human standing silently next to my bed, breathing like Darth Vader. *"Mommy, I need a wee,"* she whispered. No apology. No remorse. Just facts. My first instruction of the day.

06:45

Managed to check emails on my phone in between making breakfast, packing a school lunchbox and drinking a very strong cuppa. Thank goodness for caffeine. My one-year old was up coughing the whole night – great, looks like today will include a trip to the doctor.

07:45

School drop-off for my four-year-old while sending a couple of voice notes on some matters to my secretary. The teacher gave me the same look I give clients who forget to bring their original ID to a transfer signing, despite sending them numerous reminders. I deserved it – I forgot it's Show & Tell today. Thankfully, my "mom car" houses about half of the kids' toys – problem solved!

08:05

Called the doctor's office to book an appointment. The only times they had available were 11:00 (which conflicts with the Teams meeting I have scheduled) or 13:00 (which conflicts with school pick-up). Ok, I guess I can re-schedule the Teams meeting to later this afternoon – 11:00 it is! Thank goodness our nanny has just arrived for the day.

08:30

Logged onto my laptop and braced for the morning onslaught. First email's subject line: *"Where is my original title deed?!"* My internal response: *"Where is my life?"* External response: *"Noted. Will follow up with Pretoria Deeds Office."* A reminder pops up that I need to submit an article for a renowned legal magazine – OK, I will get to that shortly.

10:45

Managed to get through 32 emails, review an OTP, comment on a property guarantee and draft a set of conduct rules for a property association. I still need to get to that article.

11:00

Waiting to see the doctor with a restless toddler on my lap, while simultaneously taking a call on my cell phone and explaining to a client that the Deeds Office works on its own timeline. *"No, sir, I cannot speed it up, unless you know a sangoma who works at the Johannesburg Deeds Office."*

13:30

School pick up and quick lunch break. Toddler rejected her chicken nuggets because they were "too crispy on the left side." I ate three of them and some leftover bread crusts. My one-year old keeps spitting out her medicine.

14:22

Mid-consultation (on the deferred Teams meeting from this morning) with a client regarding a development lease when my four-year-old saunters into my home office wanting to get some "printer paper" so that she can draw a picture (despite about 112 perfectly good colouring books in her room). *"MOMMY! Are you on video meeting or are you doing property again?"* Yes. All of the above. She comes back about 15 minutes later to say she's drawn a picture of me. It's just a scribble and two big eyes. Accurate, honestly.

16:30

Made it through the rest of my Teams meeting, a dozen more emails, three cell phone calls, a draft notarial bond and one difficult client. Now I need to try and get the article done and submitted before my nanny leaves at 5pm.

17:00

Spent the last 30 minutes of the work day on a call with my team's director regarding the anticipated billable hours and fees for the month, as well as the outstanding debtors that we need to follow up with. Did not manage to finish the article.

18:30

Managed to reply to six emails and two voice notes in between playing tea party and singing Frozen's *"Let It Go"* for the 17th time. Fed the kids dinner while they were bathing (no escape!). Both girls refused to wash their hair. Negotiations broke down. Ended in a full-blown humanitarian crisis involving bits of food in the bath, shampoo in eyes, and someone yelling *"YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!"* (me, mostly).

19:30

Both girls asleep. Phone pinged. Urgent query: *"Can we register the transfer by Friday?"* By Friday?? I'm not Moses. I cannot part the Red Sea or Deeds Office queues.

20:00

Collapsed onto the couch with my laptop and a (secret) slab of chocolate. Reminded myself I can do hard things – like explaining a simultaneous transfer and bond process while a child is sticking Smarties up her nose. OK, time to start that article! 🙌

