



ASSEMBLY MARKET

MARCH 2020 | HELPFUL GUIDE 01



TIPS ON
SURVIVING A
PANDEMIC

THE LONG VIEW

It's probably grief you are feeling

NEW ROUTINES

Create some new habits

WEBSITES & BRANDING

Revisit your website



HOW TO SURVIVE A PANDEMIC

STAY POSITIVE

It's probably grief you are feeling

THE LONG VIEW

It won't last forever

MENTAL WELLNESS

Show yourself some kindness

NEW ROUTINES

Create some new habits

WEBSITES & BRANDING


Take a fresh look at your image



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

All written content is copyrighted to @janninenewman please ask before reproducing any of it. Thank you. Photos are credited accordingly.

Stay Positive



We are in an unprecedented situation. It's 2020 and a virus pandemic is sweeping the world forcing us into a lockdown situation. I would have never in my wildest imaginings, have foreseen this as being the reason for having to cancel The Assembly Market.

It's likely that you might be feeling unnerved, unsure, depressed or on edge. I am not a therapist, but from what I've read, we are all probably feeling a sense of grief. The world has changed, and even though we know it's temporary, it's hard to see when things might return to normal and when it does, will it even BE normal? We are grieving the loss of normality and connection with others; some have lost huge amounts of income and jobs, some will be foregoing precious times with family, cancelling weddings & special events and who could have foreseen the closure of world sporting events...the Olympic Games for instance. What sense of loss must those world champion athletes be feeling right now? This is hitting all of us and we wouldn't be human if we weren't grieving to some degree.

Give yourself some time. Grief eventually gives way to acceptance and at that point you can begin to use the time you have in isolation, wisely. I've put together some suggestions for keeping sane and structured during the next few weeks. We are at the beginning of a very difficult time; not only do you probably not have much work, you may have had to move to selling completely online with no face to face customer interaction and are staying inside, possibly with small children or elderly relatives. This can break your morale very quickly if you don't put in place a few strategies and keep a sense of your own purpose and worth.

I've pulled together a few things I'm doing and what I've heard others are doing, both on a business and personal level. We all have very different commitments and family situations, so just pick out anything which is helpful.

2

The Long View



Take the long view

Keep in mind that things do not last forever and we will eventually return to some sense of normality. It will take time, but when the upturn comes, you will want to be ready so keep your business head firmly in tune with changing events and think about how you will respond when we begin going out again. In the meantime, use this enforced captivity and social distancing to look carefully and objectively at your business and prepare for when life begins to return to normal.

It may never happen again that you have 2-3 months to put on the brakes and assess your life and your business. See it as an opportunity.

3

Mental wellness



@Silkejewellery

Stay mentally well

Our wellbeing is dictated to a degree by routines and habits, which we take for granted. All the small daily rituals we perform without even thinking, keep us focused and purposeful. Working from home in isolation we lose the rhythm of these, which has a knock on effect, with no school to get the kids to and no journey to make to work. We may get up an hour or two later which means we then go to bed much later, and our circadian rhythm gets thrown, leaving us feeling groggy, depressed, and out of sorts.

Keeping a sensible sleep pattern is I think, key to keeping a good sense of perspective. I speak from experience, as a night owl, who likes to stay up late when there's nothing on the next day, whilst I may have enjoyed whiling away the early hours, I do invariably feel terrible the next day and my ability to cope is certainly less, as is my output.

Set your alarm as if you are still going to work and make sure you have a structure to your day with a good nights sleep at the end of it. It will make a difference.

4

New Routines



Establish a new daily routine

A friend of mine, along with her flatmate, spends half an hour reading on the sofa before heading to their respective desks in the kitchen and lounge. Why? It's what they would have done on the tube heading into work. It gives them a sense of normality and sets the scene for the day ahead. They've established a new routine, which is incredibly important.

Write a list of all the things you normally would be doing and then rewrite/substitute them for the next few months with some new habits according to your new circumstances.

Be flexible, I'm having to work different hours because there are distinct times my household is quieter and easier to work in – evenings and early morning for example. In the afternoons I might cook dinner ahead of time instead of leaving it until the end of the working day.

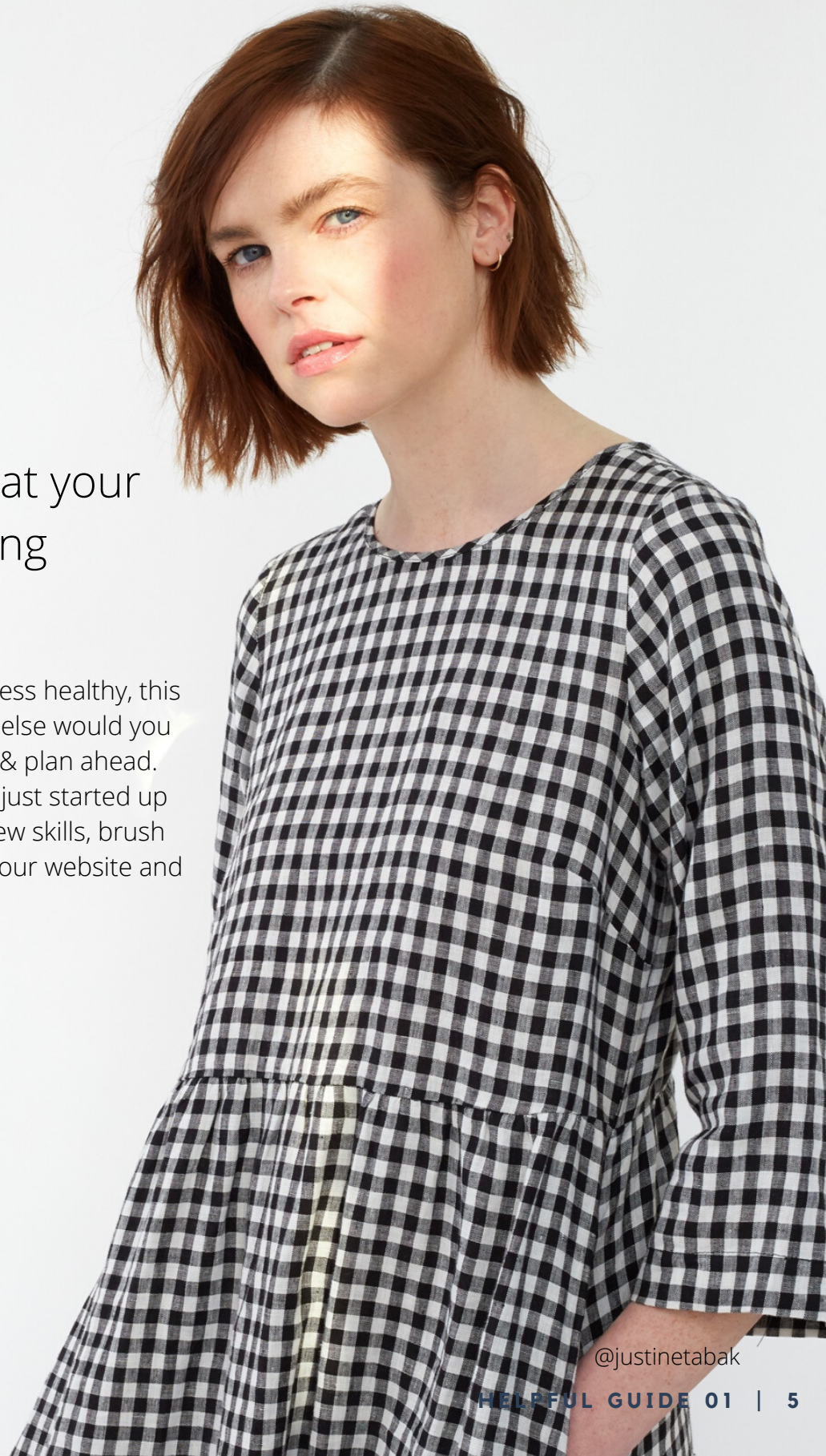
Work in some exercise – skipping, online exercise classes, run up and down your stairs and even just do some star jumps while you wait for your coffee to brew. It all helps.

5

Websites & Branding

Take a good look at your Website & branding identity

In terms of keeping your business healthy, this is a golden opportunity. When else would you have so much time to file, edit & plan ahead. This is a time, even if you have just started up your business to learn a few new skills, brush up on old ones and overhaul your website and brand image.



@justinetabak



How's your website looking?

Have a look at your website. Assuming you created it yourself, have you looked at it since you set it up or do you just upload the odd product image? Is it still relevant to you or your customer? Now is the time to think about working on the following:

- Is it looking dated and is it a site you would yourself like to browse, and if not, why not? Visit other websites and pinpoint why you like them.
- Rework your website copy if it's out of date.
- Collaborate digitally with other makers, invite people you admire to write a short blog for your website for eg. and offer them something in return. Build relationships with other makers. It makes you both more effective.
- Think about trading skills with other makers, which you can exchange digitally. Someone who can offer you advice on pricing for eg, and you can return the favour by editing some copy for them.
- If you are able, update all the SEO (search engine optimisation) on your website. If you can't do it, see if you can trade skills and get someone else to help with it.

If you haven't got a website or an Etsy shop, I would suggest you make one. Even though Instagram is now the first port of call for most customers, people still like to go to a website mainly to see more of what you are selling and to check how much your products cost. After a short scroll, it's the first thing I click on when I land on a new makers Instagram profile.

Websites are so intuitive these days, and some like Wix and Squarespace provide templates for you. It just takes a little concentration and time to make a website. It will help keep you in the customers mind and reinforce your brand.



How are you getting on with social media?

If you don't have a social media schedule, it's really worth planning one out, it will take a huge amount of stress out of your workflow and free up your time. Also plan when you will be sending out blogs and newsletters; keep it consistent so your customers know what to expect. Especially at this time, when your customers are isolated, keep in contact, not too much, just enough. I'm actually not so good at sending newsletters regularly, so I'll be working on that myself!

Think about using a scheduling app. I use a desktop and mobile app called **LATER** who also give you access to some brilliant free tutorials on using Instagram. Later is free up to a certain amount of posts each month, and you can use it for multiple accounts. There is so much free information available for improving your social media that now is the time to brush up on it.

Finally, an excellent Instagram account to follow is @notaboutthekids run by Helen Perry who will talk you through things such as using video, upping your game and how to speak to your audience. Make sure you sign up to her website for a free Friday newsletter full of useful information & news.

Does your branding tell the right story?

I receive a lot of emails from brands asking me to consider them for the Assembly Market. How someone approaches/writes to me gives me an immediate insight into their brand. - they may have some well-designed products but if I have to work very hard to spot them in amongst a mishmash of photos and an inconsistent visual identity, then I probably won't be taking the application any further. It sounds harsh, but I will feedback to brands about this if I can see they can be better.

So how are the photos looking on your website and is your branding cohesive? How you present your business/ products is incredibly important. Your customer is looking for a visually satisfying shopping experience and even if you are a small brand working within a small scale business model, you need to keep your branding and style consistent and of a high quality – it can be incredibly simple and need not cost too much but you do need to stand out, so invest in the best quality photos you can afford and the very best thing you can ever do is invest in a superb logo. You won't regret it. On the subject of logos, take a good hard look at your logo and assess if it's still serving you well or if you need to rethink it.

Photography

Not everyone is a photographer but everyone can learn to take a better picture, so if you do have to take photos yourself, think about taking an online course on how you can achieve excellent photos even on an iphone. I know one or two brands who only use their iphones to take photos of their products and they achieve excellent results. Instagram has a lot of photographers offering downloadable tutorials. Take a look at @humphreyandgrace for a free downloadable course and visually inspiring photography website.

Clean up the visuals on your website. Take off any photos which don't present your brand to it's best. If it's looking messy, It would be better to simplify and have less. Create order within your website, put collections together etc. Archive old stock for sale. Have a tidy up for your customers.

I hope that some or all of this is helpful and that collectively we can keep up our momentum and evolve positively through these challenging times.

Stay healthy & stay hopeful.

Jannine x



B

R

A

N

D