P1: Okay.

Mattia Rainoldi: From from this point in time, everything that you're going to say it's going to be report. Another thing that I need to mention any point in time, you feel uncomfortable answering my question, you can refuse to answer the question, or we can even stop the interview.

P1: Okay. Wow you've got me worried now for what kind of interview you are going to be doing me. I'm sure it'll be fine.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah it's not going to be very much different from from the Diary, so it goes in that direction right. Do you have any questions before we start with the interview.

P1: No, nothing springs to mind.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. So, at the beginning, I want to discuss about your practice as a digital worker, and I would like to start with a warm up question related to your life as a digital worker, so what is your job title?

P1: Um. I guess it's freelance writer. At the moment, I've so I've only recently started to do this full time I've been a gambling industry professional for 13 years and I've just like literally a couple of weeks ago resigned from my job as a country manager for a sports betting operation. But I've been doing I've been doing the writing as a kind of side hustle for quite a while so I've been juggling both both of those have been working remotely. So I guess it probably makes more sense focus on the writing because that's what the book, the diary was about so I guess freelance writer, was a very long winded way of saying writer.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. How would you describe your employment type.

P1: Self-employed.

Mattia Rainoldi: So self-employed, freelance or so yeah. So, in your diaries I've been reading few of your activities that we do during the day so think about your typical work day what what kind of work activities do you do?

P1: It's almost (p). It's probably (p), a 5050 split between research and writing. I haven't been doing much editing lately I don't have any editing gigs on the go. Occasionally I do a bit of editing or rewriting but it's it's predominantly writing. Somebody will say I'd like to write an article about whatever. Often, I don't know anything about it, so it requires a lot of research and then, once you've done your research and put out like a kind of skeleton structure, you get into the writing.

Mattia Rainoldi: When do you work, P1?

P1: Um, whenever I've got a job. It very much depends on whether I'm busy on aside, as you have gleaned from the diaries I've had a pretty slow week this week. Um, the week before I was writing probably seven days that week. Um, it's one of those where, if you're busy you're busy I do I do the work when it needs during and then I'll enjoy down time when I've actually got some. But I don't I'm not if you mean when do I work in terms of what time of day, rather than you know when I work, um I'm not much of a morning person, so I tend to like, I like to start later in the morning and maybe, sometimes even early afternoon and work into the night.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah sure so and when do you take days off, you said, seven days a week. Sometimes.

P1: Yeah the thing is that some of these jobs are quite small little gigs, so if I can just do something in three or four hours, I don't mind working, seven days a week, if it's three or four hours, seven days a week, do you know what I mean. One of those challenges that I'm facing having only just started to do this full time is at answering exactly that question. When do I take a day off. That, that kind of finding that balance is one of the things that I'm, I'm not struggling with it, but it does make you a little bit stressed when you kind of sat on the SOFA thinking, I could be doing something I could be doing some work but I'm actually not doing anything. So, I'm not fully enjoying my downtime when I am having downtime because I've always kind of something in the back of my mind like yeah it could be doing some work here.

Mattia Rainoldi: And do you take any holidays?

P1: It's again I'm because I'm relatively new on the full time writing thing I haven't thought too much about that, I mean funnily enough so I'm a big football fan, and yesterday, the championship for autumn were released. So I went to my usual routine looking at the fixtures and thinking right I'll go home at Christmas I'll try and take in these games, while I see my family I'll go home at Easter and try and take. Because that's what I used to do when I was full time employed as a country manager in the gambling industry. But now I'm looking at that, I think, well Covid, I might not even be able to leave the country, if I do there's gonna be quarantine so even planning holidays, has been a bit of a headache. Um, but then, having said that, when you look at where I live, I'm like I'm already on a working holiday, you know I mean I can literally walk to the beach from here, so I don't. I don't feel like I'm (p) I'm going to be taking too I don't imagine like you know when you have a full time job and you're looking at the calendar I think you're right I've two weeks there and I don't really imagine I'm going to be doing that, very often, because I can do my job on the move, as well. If I do go home and spend some time with my family in the UK, I can I can do my work for their house, you know.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah that's very interesting, yes, and hearing you say that basically, (p) where you live and what you do is basically holiday and work at the same time.

P1: Yeah absolutely. So one of the one of the attractions I'll talk briefly tell you the story of why I moved specifically to this island. So I've been in the Philippines for ages, but in Makati so in Manila basically living in this living in London. And when I started thinking about potentially resigning from my full time job sorry there's an airplane flight (airplain noise in the background). When I started to think about resigning from my full time job (pause). I know you told me to find a quiet place. I'm sorry I didn't plan on the airplane. One at one of the things it was like (p), it was a bit of a personal test, I was kind of thinking. Do I want to do this kind of thing full time? Do I want to be a digital nomad? Is that what I want to do? So, I thought here's an opportunity to put that to the test, leave the city go and live on a remote island somewhere. Test whether I'm actually going to get bored you know, am I really going to live that lifestyle and, as it happens, I really do which which sped up my decision to resign and switch over to the full time freelance writing.

Mattia Rainoldi: And that's very interesting. So. Since you said already, we moved away from the city, so where do you work there on that island?

P1: Where do I work on the island, like just pretty much from my apartment basically.

Mattia Rainoldi: Alright. Just in -

P1: (overlap) Does that make sense? Does that answer to your question? (end of overlap).

Mattia Rainoldi: In your diaries you also mentioned, working from the gym, from some kind of -

P1: (overlap) oh so you mean

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) - restaurant as well

P1: (overlap) -yeah (end of overlap). So I kind of (p) I kind of put that because I just wanted to be extremely detailed, so I guess everyone's definition of work is differently, I mean I'm not very often writing as in I've got my laptop in front of me I have been known to I didn't this week, but in the past. There's a coffee shop like to go to and I'll sit with my laptop in the coffee shop have a coffee do some writing. But I've included that in the Diary, because it is technically work, so what when a client messages me on Skype and I'm literally sat on the bike pedaling or like lifting away or something and he's messaging me, are you this article blah blah blah blah blah. So I'll put it down and I'll spend 10 minutes you know just messaging him like I'm in the gym I'll get back to you later yeah I know what you're talking about my Baba Baba and it's the customers service element of keeping the clients happy. So, yeah, I only spent five minutes or yeah I spent 10 minutes on Skype but you know it's technically working right, so I just wants to be thorough.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah I understand, yeah, so you're basically fully independent in choosing where to work, when to work, how to work, with whom to work?

P1: Yes, yeah.

Mattia Rainoldi: So do you believe that your um, your work influences your free time or leisure choices?

P1: Yeah, I think it does, yeah.

Mattia Rainoldi: How?

P1: Um, mostly because, like I say if if I don't have any jobs in the queue, then I have more free time so when I look at my schedule now and I've only got one thing which I'm going to finish as soon as this course finished. Um, I don't I don't envisage too much committed over the weekend, so I could now if I wanted. Well, in a normal scenario I'd probably book a flight to another island and go and do some activities obviously covered and everything. So what will I do this week and I think, maybe I'll go out I'll plan some dinner or some drinks, or something. Now, if I look at my queue in this 10 things there and I'm I know I've got deadlines everywhere, then I'm going to do that, obviously going to be influenc-, I'm going to be working all weekend, so I think that's probably the main that's probably the main way.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah and other way around, do you believe that your free time choices influences how you work?

P1: Do my free time choices influence the way I work? Um, I, I would imagine so but not not probably not to the same extent, so if I decided to take a trip knowing that I can work on the trip because of the nature of my job. Um, upon product, you know, on that trip I'm probably not gonna be working as hard and I'll be more inclined to turn down a job that came in knowing like if somebody says, I have gotten an agency can you turn it around in 24 hours I'm going to be like well no cuz I'm going hiking tomorrow or whatever, whereas if I was sitting in my apartment on my balcony I'll be like yeah sure why not so yeah I think so, but not to the same extent as the other way around.

Mattia Rainoldi: Why is that?

P1: Um. I don't know I just I just think that (p) I think that. My.(p) I don't, I don't know, it's just, it just kind of feels intuitive, kind of feels instinctive that my leisure choices are going to have less impact on my work than the other way around, I don't know I just it just feels I don't really have too much of a body of evidence, given that I've only really been doing this full time for a few weeks, but I don't know it just feels kind of instinctively true.

Mattia Rainoldi: I see. All right.

P1: (overlap) no like a gut feeling (end of overlap).

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah, so we do say, how would you rate your important the work, your work for you is from very unimportant to very important?

P1: Um, that's a tricky question. So, it's probably important to frame this in context. I've just quit a very senior job. Having had a pretty decent career, um, you know I've turned down, I mean I've resigned from a job that's paid me more than I've ever been before in my life. Um. So you could you could look at it and say, well, perhaps you don't value your work as much as you used to you know. When I was younger and I was ambitious and I was like busting my balls working 60 hours to try and climb the ladder and get to where I got to. Now I'm more about well I've kind of done that now, I'm getting a bit older, I want to have a bit more of a work life balance, you know I want to try new experiences, I want to try new things I want to try, working from home, at the beach. Um, so I probably don't value work as much as I used to in that context, so there were there were more important things in life but it's still hugely important to me, I get bored when I'm not doing anything I get bored when I don't have a new challenge. Um, I gotta pay the bills, (laugh) you know, like that this new business that I'm starting I'm not going to earn anything like I used to earn certainly not for the first 6, 12 months, while I get things off and running. So it's still important I'm going to worry about it I'm going to be carrying the money, and so I don't know if I had to give it score out of 10, I guess, seven out of 10 so like 12 months ago, it would have been 9 or 10 out of 10 but now I'm just trying to get more of a balance.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. So, on the same note you're saying you're trying to get a balance so, how would you rate how important leisure time or free time are for you?

P1: If we're saying, if we're talking about leisure time free time as being an opportunity to sort of like have experiences like it, so if you mean if you mean it like, if you mean it that way, rather than how important is it to make sure you have an hour's break from your computer you know, like like that, then it's probably also 9 or 10 out of 10 but I never used to value it that way and I've come to value in that way, so like it's my it's the thing I haven't been my bonnet about right now.

Mattia Rainoldi: There is a particular reason because you started valuing it more?

P1: Is there a particular reason why I've started to value -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) mhmm (end of overlap).

P1: So it's not any ONE particular thing that triggered it but it's just been an experience over the last 12 to 18 months. The whole, I mean this is going to be a boring answer, I'm sure you're going to hear this a lot, but like you know the way Covid impacted everybody globally. Um, it cost me a job effectively. You know, suddenly I'm not earning the money suddenly I'm watching all my friends in the Philippines struggling, I'm watching them all, you know properly struggling, I'm not talking about experts here, I'm talking about the locals. I'm watching them properly struggle and the building businesses out of nothing and I'm looking at them thinking God, I could never do that and it just the little things feeding in but maybe I could. It cost me my long-term relationship as well. We were under a lot of stress at the time. I watched her about to lose her job and start to do a little side or so and I helped doing the social media, for we built up a little business there that was the first time I'd ever tried anything like that and thought oh, maybe I can do something like that. I, I randomly discovered some woman on TikTok, who was a freelance writer and build a business out of nothing, and I was like okay, this is interesting and all these tiny little things over the last kind of 12 to 18 months just made me look at life, a bit differently think why am I, being a corporate slave (laugh) basically like what why am I working really, really hard to like yeah okay, I was reasonably well paid but that's well paid as my peers and like where's this money going it's aligning somebody else's pocket it's not going into you know, I, why don't I put that effort into building something for ME that I can reap the benefits of and being a bit more in control of.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah, I understand, yeah. That's very insightful. Let me get, we need to switch to a slightly different topic now and I'd like now to discuss about the role of digital technology in your life as a digital worker, so of course you are using range of different technologies I've seen from, um, from your diary, so there are any other technology part of the laptop and the phone and the series of, um, the series of platforms and tools that you mentioned in your diary that you're generally using?

P1: I mean nothing I've tried to be pretty comprehensive I can't, I can't think of anything else, I mean I don't personally, I own like a tablet or anything like that it's either going to be my phone on my laptop.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right -

P1: (overlap) In terms of the platforms I've, I mean I've tried to list everything I can think of, I probably didn't mention email I probably didn't didn't mention Gmail. I don't remember if I mentioned Linkedin at all, but I sometimes use that because you know I built a profile there from my previous career and because there is a crossover because I do a lot of writing for gambling industry companies, so I sometimes use that as a way of communicating, but I think I've covered everything, to be honest (end of overlap).

Mattia Rainoldi: Right, so do you use the same or different of these technologies for your work and for your leisure time? Do you make any difference there?

P1: Um, there would be some crossover for sure, because, so, I talked to one client on Whatsapp and obviously I'll talk to all my friends and family back home on WhatsApp. Um, I don't use Skype very much apart from to talk to my main client, but I have some I have some ex-colleagues on there that I occasionally talk to. Um, again, there's a slight bit of crossover there, obviously emails but I'm emailing clients as well, I mean, my email address is just my name, like my name, so, I can use that both professionally and personally so there's a little bit of crossover there but, like most of the stuff I'm using is, oh, my blog actually I suppose. See, I didn't know how to categorize that because I've started to build a website, which is primarily designed to attract business. So I've put a blog on there, but I'm not really using it like a diary it's probably going to be full of like you know keywords, SEO driven, is, I'm kind of using that to generate business as well, but I can imagine a situation where something's annoyed me in the world of sport, for example, and I just want to write and just vent so I guess there's some crossover there as well. But yeah, most of the platforms things like Fiverr and Upwork that's strictly business, I mean it's designed that way right so there's no -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) Of course (end of overlap).

P1: -recreational use there.

Mattia Rainoldi: So there are any particular reasons why you enable or allow this crossover?

P1: So, the question why do I allow that probably because I'm still finding my feet, so when I, when I worked for Eddie Tech, which is Africa's largest retail betting operator and I did six years with them and I climb that ladder and then I got to a very senior position and it was stressing me out. The reason I left that job is because I literally went to the doctor, we were talking about depression, we were talking about various mental health things, it was making me sick and I left that job without another job to go to. So because I just needed to get out and release the pressure, so that was a turning point in my life which actually led to me moving to the Philippines funnily enough, by coincidence, um, that wasn't planned but the point I'm making here is like that was a, that was a turning point that made me realize hang on a minute, you need to handle you can't just take your work home with you all the time you can't be connected 24/7 but I kind of wanted to be because I was trying to climb the ladder right and I've got a good work ethic, and I want to impress the bosses and whatever but at that point, I learned to draw a line so when I go home there's no answering work emails and all that kind of stuff now what's happened now is I've just left after five years of managing that really, really effectively I've left that career pull over I mean I'm starting my own business now so it's me and there's only me. So if I don't get those clients they're going to be any clients. So, I think I'm just going through that process again now of learning hang on a minute, you need to sort of step back, sometimes and I haven't quite sussed it out yet, so I think the reason is there is crossover is probably that I haven't quite worked it out yet.

Mattia Rainoldi: So when you think about your, a typical day of yours, do you have any perceived advantages or disadvantages for using technology for work and leisure as well?

P1: I think. It sort of instinct I haven't put too much thought into this kind of put me on the spot a little bit I guess that's the idea but um, instinctively it feels like the advantages are the disadvantages so, what, what's an advantage is I don't know if I'm if I'm kind of bored on the beach doing nothing and I'm sunbathing and having my phone or whatever, but I can still browse and find some client, I mean I'm not using my, that's not an effective use of your time just laying down doing nothing, so I can kill two birds with one stone by having a bit of you know, relax time but I can still find a new client, I can still scroll through Upwork, for example, looking for potential new jobs. So that's a blessing, but it's also a curse because those same clients what I'm trying to take a day off can hassle me are can you do this, can you turn it around really quickly and then I feel under pressure. I don't want to turn down, I could do with the money it's been a slow week, but you know I'm trying to relax and now, all I can think about is, or should I take this job or not. So it's an advantage and a disadvantage, at the same time, and that that would be the main advantage of fact that I can do that, whenever I want wherever I want, but obviously that's the downside as well.

Mattia Rainoldi: Could you maybe expand a little bit more on there, wherever and whenever I want?

P1: Um. Well, (pause) I suppose that's, the main thing I think of like if I'm if I'm literally say in a coffee shop or if I'm literally sitting on the beach, you know. If I'm in these places that you would imagine are not traditionally where you would necessarily do work, but even even at home, like in my house in bed, you know, on the toilet or like, like these little, these these stupid, like, like, you can literally do it from anywhere, that's I guess, that's what I mean by anywhere and everywhere in the gym. So what most people are doing when they sat on a bike or on a treadmill or like I don't know that, to listen to music they might be watching a YouTube video or something. Well, I can go on up work, and I can scroll through jobs, so I can get my exercise in and do work at the same time, so it's more, you know, more effective use of my time.

Mattia Rainoldi: Now that's very that's very interesting. To hear that effectiveness of time is also one of the main reasons for for doing what to do, the way is very interesting. So would you say that basically through traditional technologies, you are achieving your goals? (pause) So we are talking about before valuing work and leisure in different ways, or more so.

P1: Largely, yes, largely, but I'm definitely still in a period where I'm muddling it up and trying to work, it all out, so I literally finished full-time employment, two weeks ago, was it. I don't remember the exact date we should double check hang in, it was the 10th, or the, yeah it was the 10th it was my last day so it's exactly two weeks ago. Um, prior to that I've been juggling the full time job and the side hustle and I got that down eventually, I, you know it took a while, but I got that down and then obviously things, it's, you know there's been another period where we have a transition, so my my goals, my hard goals in terms of like sales, sales targets and stuff I'm definitely achieving them but I've been generous because I want to progress relatively slowly I don't want to burn myself out. Goals as in are you are you utilizing that free time the way you'd anticipated possibly, possibly not, I guess I envisage being set on the beach a little bit more often than I do, but, like some of this some of this is not necessarily, thinking about it, though some of this is not necessarily due to the way I'm doing my work, or the technology, so this is actually being imposed on me by the government, like curfews, and Covid restrictions, and stuff that we're not handling it very well in this country, in my opinion. So, there's, there's some external influences as well, but I think largely yeah, I don't feel like it it's getting on top of me I don't feel like oh, this has been a disaster it's been a terrible decision, I never get any free time but I'm inclined if I decide to be so in the gym and go on Upwork that's like you know that's been my decision I'm in control of that, but I feel like I'm largely achieving that particular goal, generally.

Mattia Rainoldi: So you mentioned, you just said, control, is control important for you? Being in control?

P1: Um, I (laugh), you should speak with my ex girlfriends, they'll give you an answer on that one, but I'm not as much of a control freak as I used to be, um, but I do still have that in my personality, a little bit. I think yeah, I think controls important. I need to feel like I'm in charge of where I'm going I don't like other people telling me what to do, um, that's probably actually this this may be insightful it may not be that's, that's the one thing, so when I said alright I'm gonna, I'm going to be self employed, I'm gonna do my own thing, i'll be my own boss, the one thing I perhaps didn't anticipate, I knew there'd be a little bit of it, but I think are perhaps didn't realize that be so much of it was being controlled by your client and you are beholden to the client, you do have to be nice to them when they're being idiots you do have to suck up to them a little bit and I'm kind of struggling a little bit with that customer service element of it because I don't like being told what to do and I don't like being told what to do, but by people who aren't as clever as me it's infuriating so yeah control is a big, yeah that is a big part of my life professionally and probably personally as well if I'm honest.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah, that doesn't influence, this particular situation, does it influence how you control, how you manage when you work, and when you do not work?

P1: Does the control element influence when I might I might work or might not work. I don't know to be honest. I'm not ducking the question, I'm just not sure.

Mattia Rainoldi: No, no. You were saying, so you like to be in control of where you're going, but at the same time, you need to answer to calls from clients, um, for example, when you are a gene, so in this case you are losing a little bit of control.

P1: Am I, though?

Mattia Rainoldi: I don't know.

P1: I don't know, like stop thought, thought, thought experiment, because I genuinely don't know. Let's think out loud. If somebody messages me and I'm in the gym, I could ignore it, but I've made, I've made that decision to say i'll tell you, i'll stop what I'm doing, i'll deal with this guy, i'll pick it up with oh god it's that idiot. Right. Okay, how do I handle this. So I've got, I've made a decision there, so I guess, I am still in control. I could tell him sorry I'm busy you know, I'm alive, some free time, leave me alone, I could make that call, um, so I guess I'm still in control in that situation. I'm not, but I am I don't know I don't it's a difficult question to answer, I don't, I don't know. I get why you say it, because they are still kind of controlling it on that, but I could tell them to go away leave me alone, so I don't I feel like I'm still in control in that situation.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right so um, in this particular case, so the core from the client chrome comes from basically you having your mobile phone with you. So you could control it through your, by setting up your digital devices in some kind of ways, do you do it sometimes or?

P1: Um. My phone is being on silent since about 2006, honestly, like I know whenever I buy a new phone, it's the first thing I do, switches to silent mode and the second thing I do is configure all the notifications, so that it doesn't make any sounds, it doesn't I like to see the numbers, because then I know something you know I've had some messages and then, if the number is oh hello we're getting out of hand there, but I don't want it to be buzzing, I don't want it to disturb me like that the main reason I've got my phone on me in the gym is really because I'm listening to the music on the phone I'm using Spotify. Oh, maybe there's that I didn't mention Spotify I will listen to music, while I'm writing sometimes. So maybe that counts as work there's a, there's another device or sorry another platform but like I'm listening to music in the gym so that's why I've got my phone with me. I could leave it alone, and I will sometimes leave it alone, especially if I'm not in the mood like if I really annoyed with somebody and I know I'm at risk of saying something stupid and maybe leave like losing a client over some nonsense, then I will walk away from it. I will leave it alone, because I know what I'm like (laugh) me my 20s I wouldn't have left it alone, I would have screamed to show it and I would have started a fight over petty little nonsense probably, um, and I've lost track of what your question was it was about having -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) well, we were just discussing -

P1: (overlap) Yes, do I, do I sell my phone and stuff like that do I set up my devices (end of overlap). Well I don't have any other device.

Mattia Rainoldi: So, um, in what way then, um, so technologies influence when you conduct your work activities or your leisure activities?

P1: If we're if we're phrasing the question as in what way did devices in what way does technology influence the way you work, then yeah, okay, I see what you say it's, it's definitely influencing things because, like some of my clients are in America or North America, you know the 12 hours behind me. So if I get a message at 11 o'clock at night here because it's their morning it's it's coming to my phone as well. So yeah, if my computer was switched off I wouldn't see it till the morning so yeah definitely my phone is shaping that because I but, but then, but again I have to, I know that I went into that with my eyes open, but I know that a lot of my clients are going to be in Europe and North America and I'm aware that I'm stuck out in a completely different time zone, which is, which is, I see that as a good thing, because I'm not a morning person anyway, I don't want to be up at 5am. I'm quite happy to go to bed at 10 or 11 o'clock we'll start my day at mid, you know midday, which puts me more into line with European time zone. Um, so yes, the phone buzzing at midnight, is, it is affecting the way I work for sure, but on my terms, I can, I'm happy with I knew that if you see what I mean.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yes, yes. And it does also influence the place where you work from?

P1: No. Well yeah, well again how are we, how are we defining work if we say if we say that taking five minutes to have a text chat on Skype is work if we are defining that as well, then yeah absolutely because I will answer my phone in the gym. I try not to in a restaurant, I put that in, the other day in the diary on purpose, because I've all that was one of the things that I was just talking about like when, when I basically made myself sick through work years ago that was one of the lines I drew like if I'm with my girlfriend in a restaurant or something no I'm not answering, I HATE it when people do that but right now I feel like they're under pressure because it's a brand new business I don't wanna I don't want to lose any clients, it's been a slow week in particular, so that that's a rare thing that I did there, but I did do it, which is why, which is why I included it. So if you can't win that as work then then yeah for sure, but if you're talking about right I'm going to sit down and I'm going to have four hours I'm going to research, this I'm going to bash out an article, did you then no, it's it's not impacting that I'm definitely in charge of that.

Mattia Rainoldi: Do you believe, P1, that using digital technologies as a way of work and, does also influence how you interact with your social connections?

P1: Sorry, can you can you run that by me again do I believe.

Mattia Rainoldi: That the way you use technologies have an influence also on your social connections, so you were mentioning being in a restaurant with your girlfriend.

P1: Does it have an impact.

Mattia Rainoldi: In your social life.

P1: It has an impact more on, so not, not, not in that situation really because I, I don't, I don't do it, I find it really frustrating when I when I see people like when you go to a gym or a football match or and everyone's got a phone out. I really hate that like, so, I'm not part of that I've just met up, I think I'm technically a Millennial I'm I have a I don't know what, I feel like I'm not part of that generation right I don't I don't behave like that and I hate it, so I try not to do it. If I don't really have to try, it's not my first instinct to pull my phone out when something happens my first and it's it's you should watch it like a normal person, born in terms of social life so because I'm, on the other side of the world to my family and my oldest friends like the guys, I went to school and university with it has a massive impact on that because 20 years ago I wouldn't have been able to keep in touch with these people right i'd have to physically pick up a telephone and call my mom and like right now, I can just have a WhatsApp group and just send a stupid memes or whatever, and she feels like oh, you know my son's talking to me, but when I first moved to London, and this would have been 2010, so it's not even that long ago, my mom would be like phoning me every week and i'd be like I've got nothing to say like nothing's happened it's boring like why do I have to have a call with you, every week and then my mom feels upset because she feels like a son doesn't want to talk to her. The best thing that ever happened was my mom joining Facebook, because when my mom got on Facebook, she felt like she could interact with me right, I could just post one stupid little thing, and she could see what I was doing and she fell included, and I could post this you know picture of me and my, my partner at the time, or you know, whatever the park and she'd be like oh look there's P1 and his girlfriend. So it has a massive impact and massively positive impact in how I keep in touch with my oldest mates and definitely my family.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. Um, (pause).Could you describe, so in your diary have mentioned it a couple of times about, could you describe in which way you try to separate or integrate work and leisure in your life? And how technology is help you to do so?

P1: Well, the big thing that I'm massively aware that this is getting all of my time because it's brand new and you know I am, I am guilty of being quiet, focus on one thing at a time it's not just work I'm like that. In pretty much all aspects of my life when I'm paying attention to this, this is what I'm paying attention to nothing else, and if you, if you say something to me I'm probably going to forget, because this is what I'm concentrating on and I'm very, very aware of what's happening with this I'm trying to start a new business I'm worried about it I'm focused on it all the time so that isn't fair on the people, so I am trying probably not massively successfully i'd like to do better, I think, in this area, um, I'm trying to keep that in mind, so if there are some things that I can do that not a lot when I'm trying to write I need you to leave me alone because I need to concentrate. But if I'm scrolling for jobs if I'm dealing with a client if it's a simple thing like if it doesn't require a call if it's just oh, how are you getting on with that article or you know that thing you submitted yesterday would you mind just tweaking that I can have those kinds of conversations around other people I can do that whilst laying on the SOFA having a conversation, maybe even having a beer and so i'll try it's I've got to do that, but I've also I'm also aware that I need to spend some time you know I can, I can I combine those two things and you know that that's probably the main example of of where I would try and combine the two I'm not trying to combine it like it when I with the restaurant example for, you know, for argument's sake I'm absolutely not trying to combine the two that I don't WANT to do that, I felt a bit desperate, the other day. I saw it buzz and I was looking at it, like oh this goes against everything I stand for I just ignore it, and I was fighting and after about 10 minutes, I was like no I'm gonna have to reply to this guy so I'm trying to separate it there, I don't want to integrate those two things.

Mattia Rainoldi: Alright. Think it maybe the other way around if you were in a work meeting and something was puzzling on your phone and you know that is a call from friends or, or family or so, would you have reacted the same way?

P1: Would I’ve reacted as in oh I should I or, shouldn't I take this you mean?

Mattia Rainoldi : Mhmm.

P1: No, I would, I don't think I would have reacted in the same way, because 99% of the time I'm just not taking like or if it's if it's my friends. Sorry (laugh), no, this is more important, but I don't then they're not getting my time it depends like if it's my mom, for example, who just never calls, that takes my brain to a dark place you start thinking oh God or something happened to my grandma or like you know what I mean, so I might take that call. But I think the vast majority it with family and friends of vast majority of the time I'm probably not taking that call I'm probably just pushing it to the side and it's like i'll just finish this i'll deal with the client first, God that makes me sound like a horrible person (both laugh).

Mattia Rainoldi: I don' think so. Do you feel that there are some rules implicit or not explicit that you follow when you're making decision in, well now, I separate what is working and what is leisure time or the other way around.

P1: Are there rules in place. Um (pause) -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) Or rituals (end of overlap).

P1: (overlap) I think, I think (end of overlap). Not rituals, I'm not I'm not. That, well that's interesting, like as soon as you said, the word ritual I kind of sort of turned my nose up because I don't think I'm ritualistic but having said that, I am a little bit habitual by I get I already after just two weeks of doing this, I already kind of get out go straight to you know, make a cup of tea go straight to the balcony sit down check my email do things in a certain order so maybe I'm more ritualistic than I realized. Um, there are definitely some rules because I put those in place like, like I said I mean I had to do that before because I didn't have those rules It made me genuinely ill and then my reaction to that was right now, I have to put certain rules in place, the only problem is at the moment I haven't really got I haven't got my routine down because it's still so fresh and still so new and I'm kind of working out but I guarantee that there will be, because there will have to be otherwise I will just get out of control again and i'll just focus too much on work and i'll get stressed, and it will, I won't be in a good, you know, a good place mentally so that I will I will put rules in place -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) So, so - (end of overlap)

P1: (overlap) - and it may just be those it may just be like small ones (end of overlap), like when I'm in the restaurant you're not on your phone put it away, you know, if I'm if I'm doing something you know, with my partner or whatever like no phone, it's probably just gonna be something as simple as that.

Mattia Rainoldi: Is there anything else that you might think of?

P1: Nothing that's as hard and fast as that there may be, there may be like a slight effort on my part to maybe use the computer less in any evening or something like that, but there's not going to be anything hard and fast like 10pm nope you know you say it's not going to be like that.

Mattia Rainoldi: Mhmm. And how do you generally manage that transition now I'm work and now I'm not work anymore?

P1: I don't feel like you're managing managing it feels like a strong strong I don't think I am managing it, and by that I don't mean I'm not managing I'm not coping I'm doing it, I don't mean it like that I just mean it doesn't feel like managing like I'm not sitting down with a diary and being like all right, at this time I'm going to do this, it just it's just kind of chill it's just sort of go with the flow like. I have, I have, I use a project management tool called Asana which I love all of my So if I you know if you go Upwork, you can see all your jobs if you go into Fiverr, you can see all the jobs, I just like to have everything in one place, and then I have that on my phone as well, so you know I get a niggling feeling like oh I'm sure I had something to do today, I don't have that kind of concerned because it's all locked there so I'm managing in that regard, but there's no kind of i'll wake up or i'll go to bed the night before and think right, I want to get that one done by today or sorry, you know by tomorrow, but I don't go to bed thinking right i'll have that done by midday in order to be able to do that by 2pm in order to be able to do that by, but I don't I'm not as strict as that it's like as long as it's done by the end of the day, if it takes me a bit longer than I planned you know if it was my partner make some lunch awesome finishes shapes me says, you want to read this i'll be like yeah okay cool and i'll put my work down and i'll go and have some lunch that wasn't planned or you know I don't know, maybe the maybe the weather's a bit nicer today so i'll go and sit on the balcony for an hour instead and i'll do that later when the sun's gone down or you know so it's not managing is quite a I don't I don't see it as that it's quite relaxed.

Mattia Rainoldi: I see. So do you believe that technology made the combination or separation of work in your in your life easier or more difficult?

P1: Does it make it easier, does it make it more difficult. These feel like, like sort of weaselly questions because it depends on what the goal is right, like I could, if somebody said oh life's rubbish now because you can never be disconnected from your job and it's 24/7 and everyone's got stress and I would have a huge amount of sympathy for that viewpoint but there are there are advantages to it as well, like it's so much easier now to get a job, like I couldn't have done this 20 years ago I couldn't sit on a beach in the Philippines and get paid for it I couldn't do that 20 years ago it's a HUGE advantage that's been brought about by technology you know my life is going to be absolutely awesome for the next few years I'm super excited about it even, even five years ago, when I first moved to the Philippines I sat this shitty office job I still had a boss, I still had you know, like I don't know I think I think technology generally is making people's lives better. I think it's taken a global pandemic for people to get shaken up, and you know wake up and realize it with like working from home and stuff like that because companies, you know not trusting their employees and stuff like that. You know it's not great, but like but that's starting to change file and I think it's hugely advantageous personally, but I do, I do have some sympathy for the you know, for the naysayers I do get that 24/7 connection is not good for you and I've seen that you know personal experience, literally going to the doctor about about that kind of thing, so I get it, but I still see it as a positive overall for me individually.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. And are there any aspect, that you say, well, that it's made it more difficult?

P1: So, generally speaking you mean.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah.

P1: So, like away from work?

Mattia Rainoldi: Well, no, always related to do work and your free time.

P1: Well, I think we've already we've already covered it like that the only the only negative I can think of work related technology related negative is that element of temptation like when I am in the gym and the phone buzzes.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah.

P1: You know if we go back 20 years and I don't have a mobile phone, and this is not a problem it's just a mised phone call and I don't worry about it, and then I go I gotta get back to my desk and i'll look somebody tried to call me i'll call him back, but now the pressure is on because they know that you've seen it and you feel pressure to immediately reply that's that's the main negative.

Mattia Rainoldi: Okay, that is very interesting, so, knowing that someone has have seen that you have seen their message so creates for you some kind of urgency, um, I mean am I interpreting it right?

P1: Yeah. Okay, so I just said we've already covered it maybe we haven't maybe I haven't gone into enough detail yeah no that's exactly right like if you know how it is right, somebody messaged somebody on Whatsapp and they double blue tick you so why haven't you replied to me, what if I offended me what what's up and what, you know, reply immediately that, you know, I'm exaggerating, for you know, comedic effect but there's a lot of truth for sure.

Mattia Rainoldi: And what sensation does it create for you?

P1: Well, if I've been left on, on read, -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) - the other way around, yeah (end of overlap)

P1: (overlap) - if I'm, I've been (end of overlap). The other way around, well, it's really hard to answer because it depends on the circumstances. Um, sometimes a message will just be all thanks for the article either do today, it was really good, I appreciate your work, in which case I don't care I don't have to reply today immediately. But if it's a good work the other day but, then suddenly it's like for fuck's sake what does he want, my um, my God, I'm gonna have to revise it, what is it going to be an hour's work is it going to be 10 minutes work is it going to be half a day's work, it could there's definitely stress like it creates anxiety like are no where's this going, and then you read it properly, and you know you see our can you read, can you change this, can you check and you know. It depends, because some sometimes, then you sit down thinking I'm gonna have to do a couple of hours work here, and actually it was just a really, really small thing and then you feel good it's like relief. Um, I'm probably going to be off track here, this was originally about when you see the messages right so it's for me it's usually a negative response. It's almost always a negative response if I if I see the notification bar on my phone and it's a new client. If it's a name I've never seen before from like Fiverr or Upwork that's a positive reaction is oh brilliant I might have a new client here cool let's let's open this and see what happens. But if it's a name that I recognize it's usually a negative response it's usually that oh no, is this going to, I've spent a full day doing 3000 words, is he going to say do it all again from scratch, you know, for no additional pay it that's usually where my brain goes I'm a bit of a pessimist though by default I'm not as bad as I used to be working hard at that, but I am kind of naturally pessimistic.

Mattia Rainoldi: Right. So we have covered already many different situations where the boundaries between work and leisure mix all the time and location and sometimes also in social settings. Do you still have any any situation, maybe not from now from the past that, that you recall that you believe is important to talk about?

P1: Um. I can't think of anything else to add about the present. I'm just thinking of stuff in the past, I mean, I again I feel I've probably already touched on it. In the past I was probably a bit, I didn't get the balance right with technology and digital technology, because, purely because I was like motivated and ambitious and driven like I felt so I took ages to get going in my career, I didn't even know why I want to do until I was like 26 or something and then I started working in a betting shop as a cashier on basically minimum wage and I was always one of the clever kids at school, you know I always did quite well academically so to be to be what I perceived to be quite a long way behind my peers. I, it when I finally did click oh, I want this is what I want to do, I really busted my balls and I felt like I was behind in a race and I was trying to catch up. So I would go above and beyond, and I would do a 60 hour week and I would be on call to the CEO like you know 24/7 because I was trying to impress and I was trying to climb the ladder and I didn't get that balance right it's fine when you're in your 20s. I get it, you know, but then you get older, you know you get into relationships you've got other stuff going on, yet you have to deal with it better than I did and that's what led to me burning out and going to the doctor and the best thing I ever did was moved to this country where life is a bit more relaxed and I think, I think I will stop saying that I've just realized, I will probably stop saying that soon i'll start saying the best thing I ever did was quit my job, and you know start working for myself.

Mattia Rainoldi: So, you said you hadn't the balance right before what about now, how do you see it?

P1: I have I've got the balance better now. It's still too early to say I'm not sorry, I know that doesn't really doesn't really help you, but like I know I'm on the right track, so what I took a new job in January, so I told you, before I lost my job because of Covid, I took a new one, in January which required me to go back to the UK and be based in the London office but I couldn't go back, because obviously London at that time was a lockdown and they, it was a super cool company to work, for they were fantastic I was only there for four or five months, but they were brilliant and they were saying oh just stay there just work remotely so that was my first taste of kind of working digitally but I was still doing my side hustle I was still doing the writing in the background which I started in September I think of last year, well, I say started I used to do this, a long time ago, when I first used to work in the betting shop. So, I was a content creator for about four years because I didn't get paid I was like minimum wage, so I used to do this stuff to top up my income so I've got a ton of experience I just went back to it because of the Covid thing. So I started working with this company and then, when I realized that could work remotely for the next few months, so right I'm going to move to the beach there and and I'm going to test that all this kind of new lifestyle and yeah I've kind of sorry I've lost my I lost my train of thought, what was the original question why am I boring you with my life story, what was the reason -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) That's, that's (end of overlap) fantastic it's very interesting to hear so, um, so you should you said before you didn't get the balance right and my -

P1: (overlap) Right, yes, that's right -

Mattia Rainoldi: (overlap) - question was do you get it (end of overlap) right now?

P1: So that's right, so, so having started that new job it was like oh here's an opportunity to see if maybe I want to do this, but like, why not work from the beach and, but I know I grew up in a crappy little villages outside Sheffield and I hated it because it's boring and I couldn't wait to go and I've always lived in big cities. So I was kind of worried that are living on an island, like yeah it's nice idea sitting and working on the beach but you're going to get bored so anyway, I pulled these theories, to the test, and I absolutely love it. So I know I'm on the right track, I know I'm I haven't got the balance exactly right just yet, because I've now left that job and transitioned you know to full time did you know running my own business I'm still trying to get my routine them there's still things I'm finding out but I know it's on the right path because I wake up every day feeling good I don't wake up every day feeling stressed or scared or I mean I've talked about when clients annoy me and I get a message on my phone oh my oh no here we go but it's nothing compared to like when I've been unhappy and my jobs before and I just don't want to get out of bed in a modern genuine depression and stuff like that I get like I get those pangs of anxiety when I see those clients just because I'm a naturally pessimistic person that's going to happen anyway, but overall, my quality of life, you know I wake up with a smile on my face, and so I know the balance is better, even if it's not perfect, hopefully i'll get it perfect within the next 6 to 12 months.

Mattia Rainoldi: That's right let's hope so (laugh). So let's come to the final question and let's take a mouth looking to the future, so let's see five year ahead, how do you see yourself working in the next five years?

P1: This is like a job interview now. So where do you see yourself in five years. I've tried, I've tried to I've tried to get the balance right on this forecast they weren't so if you're going to make a massive life changing decision like quitting your job quitting a lucrative job to to piss around on a beach and drink beer and like pretend to be a writer I've taken it seriously and I've done like projections of forecast and stuff but I've tried to be conservative so that I don't put too much pressure on myself so for the next year or two, I would just like to earn a living and as long as I can cover my costs you know just a sensible modest amount is enough to live quite well here, if I can make 30,000 pounds a year I'm absolutely cool with that five years, I would like to think that by hand I've got enough credibility reputation my prices are up and there's enough regular i'd like to think that by that I would have started to scale a little bit maybe outsource find some other people to build a small team around me and maybe tenants or business rather than just me writing on a beach, it would be more like I take a backseat and just kind of edit the content that comes in control the kind of day to day management of it like you know booking the orders and whatever, but then outsourcing the actual work i'd like to turn it into a business, so I guess five years from now it would be nice if I could be earning at least what I was earning in my other job I don't have any grand ambitions to turn this into a massive thing I don't care anymore. As long as I'm happy, so if I just make 30 grand a year just being a writer on the beach yep fine no problem, but I would like to scale it a little bit i'd like to try and do that.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah so. How do you see the digital worker of the future? So how do you imagine it being a digital -

P1: (overlap) I don't (end of overlap). I don't sorry that's a rubbish answer but I'm not I'm not I'm not like a creative like (laugh) that probably sounds stupid as well because I'm a writer, a lot of my writings quite technical I'm not particularly creative I'm not a visionary like I'm not the guy you're going to go to who is going to make your prediction, you know I'm not Elon Musk. I just turn up to work and do my job, and you know, I was always it was always in senior positions are involved in strategy type meetings and stuff but you weren't ever gain anything I mean it was me listening to the other clever people and then putting the operational stuff into practice. I don't know how the digital worker of the feature is is going to like I don't I'm rubbish with technology I don't even know what if you asked me what phone I've got i'll tell you it's the Samsung I don't even know what model is. Nothing about I've never even heard of Fiverr until up until this time last year and I thought i'll give that a go what's that I told you, I bumped into that random woman on TikTok who's been a bit of an inspiration so TikTok that's a fantastic example I downloaded TikTok in October 2019 just to see what all the fuss was about because I like to know what the kids are doing, because they're going to be my well in my previous job today we're going to be my target market in five years, top one try and be ahead of the curve, but I'm not very good at that I downloaded tech town, when this is a lot of rubbish I just don't get I don't get technology so I'm not going to be able to give you a very good answer on that one I'm afraid it will probably imagine it will be too much different to how it is now, it will be subtle changes I would imagine. I don't think, but you never know, do you like the maybe maybe there's some software developer, right now, developing the next big thing that's going to revolutionize I don't know i'll probably just be people have been more people will be more used to the idea of working from home and stuff I guess the more people will do it, but I don't have a good answer for you on that one sorry.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah don't worry. Let's get back to the TikTok example that you are mentioning for a second. How TikTok inspired you?

P1: So right, TikTok itself done this by because TikTok itself is a loaded junk right 5% of TikTok is worthwhile I there's some there's some good business ideas on there, like people sharing what they've done with you know things like affiliate marketing, drop shipping and all these kinds of stuff there's a little bit of funny content, there's a little bit late, I follow mostly like medians business people, and then the rest of it is just girls that doing stupid dances right its job, but it was one specific person. Her name is A.F., she you can you can Google it like she's getting a bit of a profile now she's getting a bit sort of like borderline famous. She, um, basically, she she was trained as a writer, or something she worked for like a PR agency or something she quit her job when she was 23 she hated it. She had been and break down floods of tears Blablabla but she quit a job, this, this would have been six or seven years ago when Fiverr was brand new. She went oh what's this Fiverr thing I'll go on she made a five books her, you know five books here there, whatever, but now she's, a she's recently, so it would have been probably been, probably been a bit under a year ago she broke the million dollar barrier for sales. You know she's now got a podcast and like she's doing other stuff like she's a bit of a brand ambassador for these like freelancing platforms. You know I've watched her journey, so I wasn't there at the very beginning, but I was there, quite early on and I've watched that grow and I'm like why the hell, he she's 28 years old, I've done nothing like you know I've achieved nothing, even close to that I can do that, like if she can do it, I can do it and I don't even want to achieve I don't want to podcast but, but like I want to earn a living being a writer getting paid to do what I love and I can do it from literally she was the first person I ever heard use that expression digital nomad which now I've heard it I hear everywhere, but i'd never even heard that before and I was kind of thinking yeah I want to do that, I can do that if she can do, I can definitely do it.

Mattia Rainoldi: I understand, yeah. So let's come to the final final question. So how do you see the biggest upcoming changes in the way we are conducting work and leisure?

P1: I feel like I’m I don't really have a view on this either. Do you want it, do you want to try and word it in a different way that I feel I'm not really related to the question, I don't know how to answer.

Mattia Rainoldi: If you think about yourself when you already moved into a new lifestyle. So, is that that you see as a change for global society trying to work in a different way and experiencing leisure in a different way?

P1: Yeah I think I think that's fair, I think that's fair. I'll be surprised, I mean I've already be reading stuff. I didn't read this I meant to say this article, and then I forgot, I saw saw saw saw an advert in the day and use the expression, what was it, the post Covid resignation boom or something and I'm like why is everyone resided I didn't know because I've only been tunnel vision focused on my, my own little world and it's like why is everyone doing I didn't read the article side, then I might have been clickbait bullshit but if that's if that's the way it's going I'm not that surprised oh God, how many people were miserable in their jobs and a half well, how many times I used to work with people like I used to work in a betting shop everyone hated it there. I used to work in a London office, everyone hated it there, especially in the winter you go there in the dark you don't see any natural light in the whole day and you go home in the dark it's, it's miserable I would not be surprised if everybody was trying to work from home, one of the reasons I I sped things up my my original plan was to keep doing my last job until the end of this year assess what my sales figures were like and then think about resigning. One of the main reasons I sped up was I think freelancing like everyone everyone's going to be doing it like particularly stuff like content creation and writing it might get a bit saturated I might, if I get in quicker I can build something up and like you know, be at the top of the tree suppose it's a bit like pyramid settling or something like you need to get in early right, so the longer I leave it, the harder it might be. Because I think everyone's going to have a crack at it, some will fail or succeed, but I think everyone but not everyone, but a lot of people will will try and do a bit more kind of working from home, maybe independently, you know not having a full time employee.

Mattia Rainoldi: Why do you think so?

P1: Why do I think so just because they've been given a taste of it there. The pandora's box is open. The genie's out with the bottle, everyone knows now that you can do it there's no secrets anymore like there's no like the big companies can't say oh well, you know you're not going to be as productive when you when you've got your children, bullshit like some some companies have been maintaining their figures, many have improved because they're getting more productivity, because people are happier, go figure who default.

Mattia Rainoldi: Yeah. very good, thank you, P1 for that. Last last question, do you have any other things that you would like to contribute about what we have been discussing that we didn't mention that we didn't talk about? That is important for you?

P1: No nothing really springs to mind I’ve got off on quite a few tangents already, so I think I think I’ve kind of covered all the stuff reasonably well, I mean nothing springs to mind if I do think of anything i'll ping you an email, but I don't I can't think of anything else.

Mattia Rainoldi: Then, well done. If you have any question about this interview or related to the project, you also can, you feel free to to ask.

P1: Thank you very much. I will keep that in my mind.

Mattia Rainoldi: So, well then, officially, thank you very much for contributing. I very much appreciated the conversation and I'm sure that there is a lot that I'm going to to learn from from from this interview, thank you very much.