



## The Covid diaries: Day 49 - Third Quarter Stage

A daily fly-on-the-wall blog about running a legal business during the Covid-19 crisis.

By **Dónall Breen** - 27 May

This article is based on an excellent report from Australia's ABC, I would recommend reading the source material [here](#).

Apparently, this is the phase of isolation where things gets weird.

By looking at the experiences of astronauts, explorers and others who have self-isolated in the past, we are now entering a stage called the 'third quarter'. Although we don't know when lock down will end, many are assuming restrictions will be lifted soon and we are almost at the end. They are the markers of the third quarter stage.

Apparently this is the hardest part of the isolation process. Those on the ISS, for example, have said that the third quarter is where interpersonal relationship management became the hardest and tempers became frayed. Those in the Arctic have said their lowest point was three-quarters of the way through their stay (regardless of how long the mission was).

I am a lawyer, not a psychologist, so I won't pretend to know the science behind it. But I will say that knowledge is power. If we know this is going to be tough, at least it gives us a chance to prepare for it. Don't be too hard on yourself, it's OK to have down days. This is normal.

However, when you get through that patch things seem to bounce back quickly. One of the most fascinating aspects of the self-isolaters they studied is that the overwhelming majority wanted to do it again (>90%). Appreciating the correlation/causation argument (only those who are OK with self-isolating would become astronauts/Arctic explorers in the first place), I do think that many office workers who have worked from home lately will have a similar mindset.

How glorious has it been to actually have some quiet time without the pressure of a jammed schedule or the daily commute from hell? I haven't had a boozy late night in weeks and I can feel it. Although the days behind my laptop are long, they are also relatively peaceful.

I couldn't do this forever, but my job allows me to maintain an income whilst isolating. This is a privilege I think I need to make better use of.

Perhaps when this is all over, self-isolating a few weeks a year won't always be just for public health reasons. In my case, it may be for my mental health reasons too. Having said that, I am of course conscious that some people are, conversely, finding it tough on their mental health. I'm just saying that for me, there has been a definite upside.

So let's get through this third quarter, get out the other side, and all pretend we are astronauts and Arctic explorers.

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If you would like to read our **Covid diaries starting from day 1** please click [here](#).