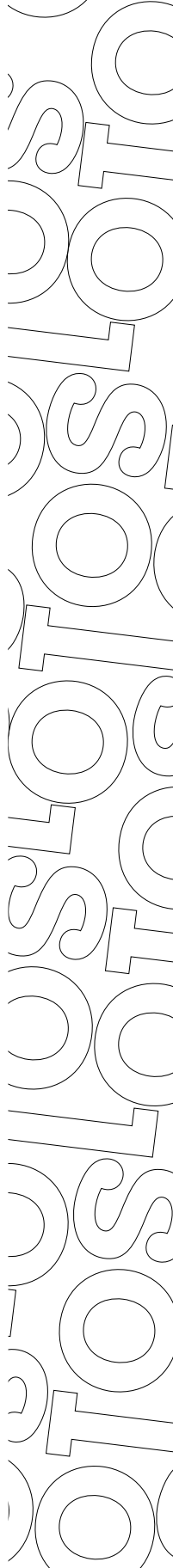
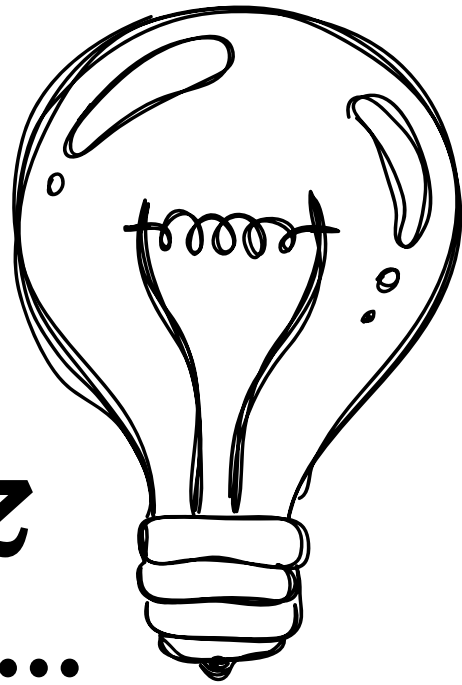


# *the* **Solo Biz** **Retreat...** *it's good thing*



Imagine a business retreat where instead returning with a to-do list you come back with a completed list!

Create space to work ON your business. Cheaper than a conference and you come out of it ahead and ready to rumble! How often do you invest in conferences and workshops and come out of them stoked and inspired to impact your own business, and then you get to your office and find yourself inundated with client work demanding your attention.

I would like to follow up here that I am not downplaying the value of quality conferences and workshops. They are brilliant for connecting with your 'people' and yes, the value of the the information as well. It is just that, after a few years attending and running your own business, you have all this insight into doing things better, but still need the time to put

into your business to make the changes happen. The changes don't happen at the events, they happen when you take what you learn and put things into action.

There are so many elements of running a solo business, financial, marketing, sales, administration, prospecting, and more. I came up with this concept after hearing of another creative who talked about getting away from the demands that come with working from a home office. So as I took the time away, I booked off a Friday - Sunday weekend and came up with an outline/agenda for planning follow up retreats.

As a mother working from home, with kids in grade school, I realized that taking away my weekends for this type of getaway didn't

balance with my desire for more family time, so going forward I now plan my retreats as during the weekdays. So for example a Thursday to Saturday getaway, I am only looking a day and half a the office and a morning with my family on the Saturday, and to be honest, they don't really emerge out of bed until noon anyways.

The benefits of this have. Also this way my husband doesn't need to schedule days off (he works shift) to manage the kids, Thursday and Friday are regular school days so he can work the day-time as normal and be with them most of the day when they are home.

# Running the Numbers

Let's compare a 3-day getaway with two nights accomodation:

## A 3-Day Conference or Workshop

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Event Ticket*      | \$500 - \$1,500          |
| Flight/Travel      | \$500 - \$1,000          |
| <b>Travel Time</b> | <b>3 to 10 hours</b>     |
| Accomodation*      | \$150 - \$350/night      |
| Food*              | \$100 - \$500            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$1,400 - \$3,700</b> |

\* NOTE: As a Canadian, this value will change when heading stateside - so add in 30% for currency conversion.

## B Solo Biz Retreat

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Event Ticket       | N/A                      |
| Travel/Gas*        | \$0 - \$50               |
| <b>Travel Time</b> | <b>30 min to 3 hours</b> |
| Accomodation       | \$0 - \$300/night        |
| Food               | \$100 - \$500            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$200 - \$1,150</b>   |

\* NOTE: If you are heading somewhere very local - you could get a ride from a friend or loved one.

**Travel Time.** Why did I highlight this? As a solo business owner, time is money. Every hour you spend away from the office is lost billable hours. So tack on your hourly fee to the total cost of the time it takes you to travel to the destination.

**Do you see what I see? Savings of at a minimum \$1,200 and up to \$2,500!**

That equals the cost of taking one family member on a holiday! On the flip side, should you be able to invest in the annual expense, for one big pricey event - you could take 3-4 retreats in one year! I have heard from a few other solo businesses who find themselves finding a conference they value but attending every other year. This type of alternate between a conference one year and the next year focusing on taking action in your business gives you the benefits of both worlds.

Let's get real. Use this space to price out and compare an upcoming conference you are interested in attending to what an ideal solo biz retreat would be for you.

## A Paid Event

EVENT:

|                |    |                             |
|----------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Ticket price:  | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |
| Flight/travel: | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |
| Travel time    |    | <input type="text"/>        |
| Accomodation:  | \$ | <input type="text"/> /night |
| Food:          | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |

## B Solo Biz Retreat

DESTINATION:

|                |    |                             |
|----------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Flight/travel: | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |
| Travel time    |    | <input type="text"/>        |
| Accomodation:  | \$ | <input type="text"/> /night |
| Food:          | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>  | \$ | <input type="text"/>        |

**And the winner is:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Let's Do This!

Okay, you are sold, now it's a matter of getting set up and packed!

Being prepared is always a key to success. Putting in some time ahead to create a plan and making sure you have everything you need ensures you make the most of your time away. I have some suggestions on what to plan for as well as what to pack to bring with you.

## 1. Project, tasks and focus

This is the No. 1 item to make sure you aren't just going in willy nilly. When you have no plan or list of things to accomplish it makes it a challenge to feel like you made the most of the retreat. I have provided top three items to write in. As well feel free to add in a few more. You never know how far you can get. This way you will have a reminder on what you needed to get done.

## 2. Snacks and beverages

The first on my list is snacks, you don't want to find yourself in the middle of working and getting the munchies (procrastination) urge. Stock your space with some of your favourite beverages and snacks, both healthy and not. You want to nourish your mind and soul to do your best work.

## 2. Mini office on the go

Bring what you need, laptop, power cords, mouse, camera, pens, pencils and notebooks. If you have a planner - bring that too! This is a brilliant time to plan offline where you are inspired by your inner voice, not Siri's.

## 3. Books and reference materials

You know that business book that has been collecting dust on your shelf? The latest magazine you keep walking past? Bring them! Bring positive distractions that will alleviate the boredom as well as inform and provide you with insights.

## 4. FOCUS sign

Yes, I think this is a must. It needs to be placed on your desk where your eyes will wander from the screen as a not-so-subtle reminder to keep eyes on the prize. It doesn't need to be fancy. The first one I made was a hand written large scrawl on a piece of paper. Or you can make it a fun creative project to design and print something out, or want to be even lazier? I have a FREE one you can download online: <http://bit.ly/ccVol3-FOCUS-Sign>

## 5. Out of office notifications

You don't want to leave your valued clients out in the cold. Give them at least one to two weeks notice about your retreat. As well set up your email autoresponder and let people know when you will be back.

### Solo retreat plan of attack:

DATE(S):

LOCATION:

PROJECT/TASKS/FOCUS

1.

2.

3.

### CHECKLIST TO PACK/BRING

Snacks and Beverages

Mini Office (Laptop, etc.)

Books to inspire and reference

FOCUS Sign

Out of office notifications

# Making the most of your time

Suggested itinerary and schedule.

This example is how my retreats have worked and at the same time not all things go according to plan. But having a schedule to follow does help ensure to be accountable to the time that you do have. Feel free to make your own or tweak this one. Also when you are in it - don't be surprised if things go awry. Whether it's distractions or you find yourself going down the rabbit hole one one project, that is okay.

DAY  
1

## Find your Flow

### 12:00pm Lunch

Shoot to leave the house and arrive close to your hotel or getaway location. In general most locations have a 3:00pm or 4:00pm check in. So arranging to have lunch, yes solo is a perfect opportunity to take a moment to breathe and check out from the chaos of your regular day. Have your notebook handy and use the time to jot down notes or even journal what is on your mind and what you hope to accomplish.

### 2:00pm Post Lunch - Pre Check In

Depending on if your lunch location has the space to lounge until check in, you can check out a local coffee shop or library to continue to plan and take notes or use the time to shop for necessities like snacks and beverages.

### 3:30pm Check In and Organize

Set up your room. Plug in your laptop, arrange the space that works for you. Unpack and get your snacks and beverages put away and cooling for when you need them. Breathe. There is no need to jump in head first. Check out the local eateries and area. Write out your own schedule for the retreat and pop in breaks to walk and get some new perspective and fresh air.

### 5:00pm Focus *Turn off distractions*

Give yourself at least an hour to set time aside to **turn off distractions** and start writing, planning or working on that project that is top of mind. This is a short stint to warm you up to getting into the focus groove. In fact, you may find you are not as keen to follow your original plan - that is okay. As long as you are working on something that has been put on the backburner, you are ahead of the game.

### 6:00pm Dinner - Get Out

This is a good time to take a breather and grab a hot meal. Day 2 is a larger stint in your room so treat yourself. Bring one of those books you have been meaning to read. Let it be your company while you dine.

### 7:00pm Focus *Turn off distractions*

Okay your belly is full and it's time to get at it! Spend at least a couple of hours working on one or two of your projects, listen to your intuition and work on what feels right. I know plenty of productivity experts suggest working on the stuff you dislike first is best, but this is a **retreat** - focus on the *treat* to yourself and start with some fun.

### 9:00pm Bed Rest

We aren't in Kansas anymore Toto. The demands of your home are not your worry right now. It's a good time to get to bed at a reasonable hour. We all have our natural rhythms, and that is okay. Simply plan for at least eight hours of sleep. That's right you heard correctly, eight hours. You want to start your full day of focus well rested!

DAY  
2

## Get'er Done!

- 7:00am Wake up for Coffee and Breakfast**  
No sleep for the wicked people, you are on the clock. After a solid night of bed rest, start your day with the basics. A walk to the local coffee haunt with book is a great start.
- 8:00am Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
With your body nourished and caffeinated (or not) it's time to sit down and enjoy the quiet. Get working. If you feel a need to nosh, make sure you have your snacks and beverages ready to graze.
- 11:00am Lunch Break**  
Okay you have been at it and things are moving along. Time to step away. If you are like me, now is a great time to have a shower since I dived right into work in the morning. Or some fresh air can work. If you need a quick meal - go out and grab it, you can check your social media while you dine out or just bring it back to your room.
- 12:30pm Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
I don't know about you, but I start to feel the pressure to get more ahead. Take stock of what you have accomplished so far and refer to your original plan. What has been dogging you and now is the time to focus on those things that you dislike doing.
- 3:30pm Mental Break**  
You have been hard at it and have made headway on those things you just don't like doing. Stretch, call a friend or do something fun, like a thirty minute nap!
- 6:00pm Dinner**  
You have been hard at it. Time to either order in room service or pop out and grab a hot meal. Take a solid hour out of your room if you can or step away from what you have been working on.
- 7:00pm Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
It's day two final push! Make an effort to get at least two of your top three projects/tasks completed or at least started on.
- TBD Best Rest**  
So here is the thing, you might be in a real groove and getting so much accomplished and are so energized because you had a solid eight hours sleep, you can keep going... then do it! Shut eye by midnight if you can.

DAY  
3

## Final Push

- 7:00am Wake up for Coffee and Breakfast**  
It's the final day. Wake up - grab a coffee and graze on the random food you have left in your room. It's time to get serious.
- 7:30am Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
This is your last focused time slot. There is no more doing things you like, it's about doing what needs to get done.
- 11:00am Check Out**  
Pack it up. Check out and if you have an hour or three - snag a spot at a lounge or coffee shop and take stock of your retreat. What worked and what did not. Consider scheduling your next one now.
- TBD Back to your regularly scheduled life.**

# When you need a buddy or two...

For some, there are times when having another person around can both help alleviate the quiet solitude as well as provide insight and feedback when you feel like you are looping.

Inviting another colleague or two to join in on the re-treat experience is another option as well. I would suggest a few guidelines to ensure you come out of the 3 days feeling accomplished.

## 1. Limit the numbers to 2 invitees

Keep the invitation to include no more than two more people. This gives you a final number of three and when meeting up, keeps the conversation shorter while each person finds they have the space to be heard and get the insight and feedback they need.

## 5. Choose team members wisely

This is important, make sure those who join you are in the same frame of mind as well as have similar styles when it comes to working. This is almost like a co-working situation, so whether they are in the same field you can share openly with or are they not and perhaps want to avoid teaching them your business?

## 3. Separate bedrooms / work areas.

There are a variety of accommodations out there, but the key is that each person has their own room - no sharesies. Ensure the space provides private room space to work alone and be able to close the door.

## 4. Define the expectations of each re-treater.

If you have quirks and needs to be focused, tell your team member(s), things like quiet should be respected.

## 5. Go with the flow

One of the retreaters may find they are in such a good focused flow they don't want to leave, that is okay - be flexible with the schedule and do what works for you, your team members should be supportive.

DAY  
1

## Team Solo

### 12:00pm Team Lunch

Meet the crew for lunch and discuss over a meal the days schedule and what each person is hoping to complete and get out of the retreat. Plan out your meet ups over meals in a schedule that works. Choose the eateries in advance to avoid the "I don't know where we should go, where do you think, lost void of topic."

### 3:30pm Check In and Organize

Each person sets up their own room and gets settled. Find your groove and enjoy the quiet hour in our own way.

### 5:00pm Focus *Turn off distractions*

Give yourself at least an hour to set time aside to **turn off distractions** and start writing, planning or working on that project that is top of mind. This is your first focused stint to warm you up to getting into the focus groove. Work through dinner, having your beverages and snacks on hand.

### 8:00pm Drinks with the 'Team'

Reconnect over a beverage and talk through how things are going. Keep the get together limited, trust me, a morning hangover is not conducive to be productive in the morning.

### 9:30pm Focus *Turn off distractions*

Back at your room, perhaps your discussions over drinks inspired you to write or complete a few more things before bed.

### 10:00pm Bed Rest

Plan for at least eight hours of sleep. That's right you heard correctly, eight hours. You want to start your full day of focus well rested!

DAY  
2

## Get'er Done!

- 7:00am Wake up for Coffee and Breakfast**  
If you find your team members have their own wake up routine and schedule, that is good - you can join up for coffee or not.
- 8:00am Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
With your body nourished and caffeinated (or not) it's time to sit down and enjoy the quiet. Get working. If you feel a need to nosh, make sure you have your snacks and beverages ready to graze.
- 12:00pm Team Lunch**  
Whether you choose to lunch together or not - who knows how the work flow has been going. Check in with each other and either meetup for lunch at the pre-determined spot or bow out. Keep the lunch short.
- 1:00pm Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
I don't know about you, but I start to feel the pressure to get more ahead. Take stock of what you have accomplished so far and refer to your original plan. What has been dogging you and now is the time to focus on those things that you dislike doing.
- 5:00pm Early Team Dinner**  
You have been hard at it. Take an early dinner with the team and check in with each other, share how things have been going and provide and tips and insights on what you have each accomplished.
- 6:30pm Back at it Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
It's day two final push! Make an effort to get at least two of your top three projects/tasks completed or at least started on.
- TBD Best Rest**  
So here is the thing, you might be in a real groove and getting so much accomplished and are so energized because you had a solid eight hours sleep, you can keep going... then do it! Shut eye by midnight if you can.

DAY  
3

## Final Push

- 7:00am Wake up for Coffee and Breakfast**  
It's the final day. Wake up - grab a coffee and graze on the random food you have left in your room. It's time to get serious.
- 7:30am Focus** *Turn off distractions*  
This is your last focused time slot. There is no more doing things you like, it's about doing what needs to get done.
- 11:00am Check Out**  
Pack it up. Check out and if you have an hour or three - snag a spot at a lounge or coffee shop and take stock of your retreat. What worked and what did not. Consider scheduling your next one now.
- 11:30am Team Lunch**  
Present to each other what was accomplished. Talk through next steps and if you have the opportunity... continue to work at a lounge or coffee shop but together - like co-working.
- TBD Back to your regularly scheduled life.**  
So here is the