

CONVERSATION & AFTERNOON TEA WITH SAMINA AZAM

JULY 2020 - ISSUE 3



AFTERNOON TEA

Those of you who know me, will know one of my favourite past times is enjoying afternoon tea.

The artistry, tradition, venue and food but most of all the company. This is my virtual version of having a catch up with a friend over tea & cake.

Enjoy my conversation with

Paula Harding
Executive Assistant at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) working alongside Professor Phil Padfield, Dean of Education.

I am a member of the PA Hub, Executive and Personal Assistants Association and the Institute of Administrative Management.



WELCOME TO OUR THIRD EDITION FEATURING - PAULA HARDING

Hi Paula, how are you doing and what are you up to at the moment?

Honestly I've been on a roller coaster over the last few months. On one hand I'm struggling like many people working from home, missing the interaction with my Executive and work colleagues, being restricted with what I can do. On the other hand I am grateful to be well, to have a job and have contact with my family and friends by phone or online.

I miss going to events but on the other hand I've really enjoyed, appreciated and learnt so much from all the webinars different people have put on. The connections that have been made during these sessions wouldn't have happened and I do realise that this new normal has brought about exciting opportunities.



O C U L U S
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cont'd

I only wish that so many people didn't have to suffer whilst we have gone/are going through this.

Who are you watching/listening to?

So many Samina. I'm loving the sessions by Sivan Joss #JossieTalks, Lucy Chamberlain, Executive Secretary, The PA Hub, The Assistant Room, Practically Perfect PA, Sarah Howson's Strategic PA Recruitment, Daniel Skermer's PA Forum, Skevi's The PA Way, John Haynes' International Coaching Academy, Alice Scutchey's Canary Wharf PA Club and her new Dubai PA Club and so, so many more. It's been hard to keep up.

What's your favourite tool/app?

Ah tech, come on now Samina, you know I'm not the most techie person you ever met. I'll tell you what I use mainly on my phone; WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, my bank's app, PhotoGrid, Alarm, Canva, Spotify and Notes. With work the main one I use is Doodle to plan meetings which has been a great help many, many times. We're getting more and more used to Microsoft Teams now and I am very slowly learning how to use it. I follow Diana Brandl, Michelle Bowditch and Vickie Sokol Evans for the latest Tech news and advice and I've booked up for Executive Secretary's #ExecSecTech on 23 and 24 September. Also, Sheryl Newman of Appetite for Business has some exciting plans in place which I'm following. I've accepted that I don't have to be an expert at everything, however, I do have to be curious, to watch, observe and trial new advances to ensure that I have the latest skills and knowledge that are relevant to me and my organisation.



WHAT'S YOUR BEST LOVED CAKE, TEA, COFFEE OR VENUE?

Honestly? I'm a kind of Costa coffee and treat girl. I'm not into posh places. I love to get into a coffee shop like that and chill out reading through LinkedIn for an hour. I once took a day off just to sit in Costa all day, sitting in the window on a bar stool, reading and watching the world go by. I love a pastry, I've only discovered that I like them in the last few years and that has absolutely contributed to the extra baggage I'm carrying.

<https://www.costa.co.uk/>

#TeaWithSamina

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Are you reading anything?

Sadly no. I have many, many books to read and many, many more on a list to buy. I love to read articles on LinkedIn, I find that the variety interests me much more and as they are only short, I can get through many, as opposed to reading a whole book. I find it really hard to sit down at home and read a book, I start nodding off after a few pages. 2020 was going to be my year of organisation, to do the things that would free my mind up to read more. The article that you shared the other day Samina has given me a new resolve to get organised. The article suggested asking yourself 'why not do it now?'. That really helped the procrastinator in me.

A vision/goal your going to make happen this year?

As I've already mentioned, 2020 is my year to get organised. A lot of the things I don't do or worry about is due to my lack of organisation. I have many ideas and I find it hard to make progress on them as they all go on a list which gets longer and longer. I also want to lose some weight before the end of the year as it has really knocked my confidence and my enthusiasm for saying yes to opportunities. I want to spend the rest of the year getting organised, losing weight and then 2021 will be my year of action.

WORDS OF WISDOM

PAULA IF YOU WERE WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

To worry less about making friends, being a success at work, getting a property, earning lots of money. What you will realise when you are older is that life is what matters, the journey along the way, the friends you make, the love you share with others, the opportunities that come your way, the experiences you will have. You will learn and grow. Different people have strengths and weakness and it all adds up to the wonderful jigsaw of life. Your life will have many different pieces, some will be a bit disheveled and some will be missing, but it is your jigsaw so enjoy going out and finding your pieces.

Paula feels like you've opened the door to your soul with such powerful, heartfelt and vibrant words. You are an inspiration and advocate. You champion the EA role as a vocation not a job.....

