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# Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators  
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## President's view

October marks the end of my maternity leave and my return to work. It's hard to believe that a whole year has passed since the birth of my daughter, even harder to believe that I am heading back to work after a year's absence. People told me the year would fly by and they were so right. I'm sure I'm not alone in this but as a first time parent I envisaged all the house projects that would finally get done now that I was going to be home for a year. I made a list of everything that needed to be done and which months I would aim to get the individual projects completed. After all, how much time and energy would a small baby really take up, right? I mean of course the first few months would be tough but once we got a routine going I would have lots of free time.

I had heard that there would be lots of sleepless nights ahead of me over the coming months so I downloaded books on my kindle to keep me going, I stockpiled box sets that I have been meaning to watch for ages, and I finally thought now would be a good time to give audible a go since there was bound to be a lot of walking during the days. I had ambitious plans including, attending some lovely baby groups that I knew were happening locally to me. If I still had time, I would make some amazing sensory toys for my baby following one of the numerous tutorials on Pinterest.

A few weeks into my maternity leave, I of course realised how naive I was in thinking that any of these things would happen. It took about two months for me to feel in any way back to normal in myself. At that point I thought there is no way any of those house projects are going to get started. With the exception of two small items, the rest are still on the to-do list. In those first few weeks, there were times when my daughter

fell asleep on me and I couldn't move without waking her so some of those lovely boxsets were watched. Kindle books still remain unread, but I have made great use of audible during those long walks during the day trying to get the baby to go off for a nap. We did make it to some baby groups, but once weaning started they were quickly forgotten about.

The two big questions that I was asked a lot during the year, am I returning to work and how do I feel about that? Honestly, I'm excited to go back to work. I've enjoyed being at home with my daughter and spending this time with her. Seeing the first smile, experiencing the first giggle, the first time she rolled, and just watching her discover the world around her. It has been an incredible year and I'm so grateful that I'm fortunate enough to be in a position where I can take a whole 12 months off to be with her and watch her grow. At the same time, I have missed my 'adult life'. I've missed my team and the daily banter we have. I've missed adult conversations, and mealtimes that don't end with me being covered in food! The excitement I feel is akin to a first day at a new company with the difference being that I don't have the usual first-day-on-the-job nerves because I already know how to do the job. The only thing I'm worried about is whether I will remember my passwords to the various systems I use.

Perhaps the reason I feel so calm and yet excited is because I visited my office over the summer to say hello to people and sort out my return to work. I woke up early that day, not with dread but with excitement. I was buzzing around the place getting ready with a huge smile on my face. I have never been so happy to go to work. The train journey for once was lovely. I got to sit on a train, with nothing to do other than drink a hot coffee at my leisure.

Being a seasoned commuter I now rarely look out of the train window. However, that day I appreciated the view from the train, and the silence in my head. I'm one of those people who always has earphones in her ears listening to a podcast, audio book or music. It's the only way I can block out the noise around me and just have some 'me time'. Since having my daughter I have learned how to block out the noise without the need for earphones. I don't know how, but I think it has something

to do with listening to a crying baby and spending what feels like an eternity trying to figure out how to calm them down. The silence that follows is unlike any peace I have ever experienced. Your ears stop ringing and those beads of sweat stop forming on the back of your neck. Since then, all the external noise, doesn't bother me anymore. I now understand and appreciate the silence of a beautiful summer morning when only a few people are actually up and about, the silence of sitting in a garden listening to birds and insects and nothing else.

The happy vibes continued when I arrived at the office. It was so lovely to see people and catch up on the events of the past year that I missed, hear about work stuff such as releases that had gone out and dates of the ones due soon after I return. My work colleagues were happy to see me and it was lovely to have adult conversations that did not revolve around babies. That one day catch up at work made me realise just how much I like what I do and how much I missed my colleagues.

A lot of people have told me that I will find it difficult leaving my daughter in childcare when I return to work and that walking away from her on that first day will be the hardest. Things might change between now and her first day at childcare, but right now I'm looking forward to seeing how my daughter develops and grows by spending her day having fun with other children. I'm excited to see how she gets on with them and hear about her first friends. I'm excited to hear about her day when I collect her in the afternoon. Granted, until she starts to talk for herself, I have to rely on the childminder to tell me how her day went, but it will still be exciting.

### Technical Communication news

TCUK 2019 is just around the corner and will be held at the Chesford Grange hotel in Warwickshire. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the conference and it promises to be an unmissable event. Warwickshire is most famous for being the birthplace of William Shakespeare and the county is well worth exploring. **C**

#### Reference

TCUK website  
<http://technicalcommunicationuk.com>

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