



# Hotel Quarantine Mindset Reflections



Need an idea of things to do in quarantine? James shares his challenging 14-day experience, and how he preserved mental strength during the ordeal.



**James Schramko**

**James:** James Schramko here, welcome to Episode 873 of SuperFastBusiness. Today, I'm recording this in a hotel quarantine room. So it's going to be an interesting format. I've made a couple of notes here because I really wanted to share what's going on so that we can get the lessons learned through this experience.

### **The setting and how we got here...**

This place that I'm in at the moment is a small room. I'm sharing it with my wife and my two-year-old daughter, Lucy. And there are no opening windows and no balcony. So it's somewhat claustrophobic. But to understand how I got here, we have to really wind back four or five months.

So lockdown in Sydney, the second lockdown started in June. During winter, it was cold, there were new mandates, we had to wear a mask going from our front door to our car in our building. When we go to childcare, for example, we would have to line up on the X on the spot, temperature check, sanitizers, QR codes, and then the teacher would take the child away. It all started feeling very Draconian.

Not only that, everyone is at home now. And where I'd normally be surfing, there'd be three to five people out during the week, now there's 150 people. So it just started to feel like it's cold, it's dark, it's locked down, it's getting a little bit crazy. And I felt like it's time now to move into a house and to be closer to my parents.

**Lucy:** Me too.

**James:** Yeah, you want to go too?

**Lucy:** Yes.

**James:** You come with us.

So we thought, time to change. So we had a look. We're of course locked down, but we still managed to find a property to get access to, which we did. It was a bit of competition as well, there were four or five other people looking for the same thing. But we managed to work that out.

So time passed by, and we put in our application, and I listed everything on the classifieds to sell as much as possible for this interstate move, and we applied for a permit. It might sound strange if you're from outside Australia, but in Australia, the state borders are locked, and the only way they will permit me to go from one state to another is to fly. I'm not allowed to drive.

I need a permit, and I must stay in 14-days hotel quarantine at my own expense. I must pay for the food they send, whether I want it or not. I can tell you, it's mostly rubbish. It's carbs and sugar (and you might hear a little bit of crunching going on here). We're having some pretzels, well, she is. Now, I'm pretty much ordering from outside these days. So anyway, that's sort of setting the scene for how we got here.

Other little things, you know, like when the swim school closed, it was like not that fun. Towards the end, of course, we didn't have any childcare. So I really respect any parent trying to run a business with a kid. It's virtually impossible. [Lucy mumbling] Case in point.

So basically, everything's very expensive as well, like airfares were expensive. I had to transport my cars. I had to pay for the removalist. And of course, we've got to pay for this luxurious stay in this little boxy room.

## **A difficult thing to adjust to**

It feels bad, you know, for someone who's used to having some freedom to be herded around the airport by police, one of them, in particular, with brightly colored hair, was barking at us to speed up, as if she wanted me to trip over the lady in front of me.

And then they make you load your bags under the bus, and then they make you wait while they shuffle you in one at a time. And then when you get into the room, the first thing I did is call up and say, Hey, is there the option for an interconnecting room? Could we get access to a balcony? They said, No. Once you go into the room, you can't come out of that room for 14 days. You can apply for a room change, after five days and having a negative COVID test. But basically, you're stuck. They didn't use the word stuck. But I definitely felt trapped.

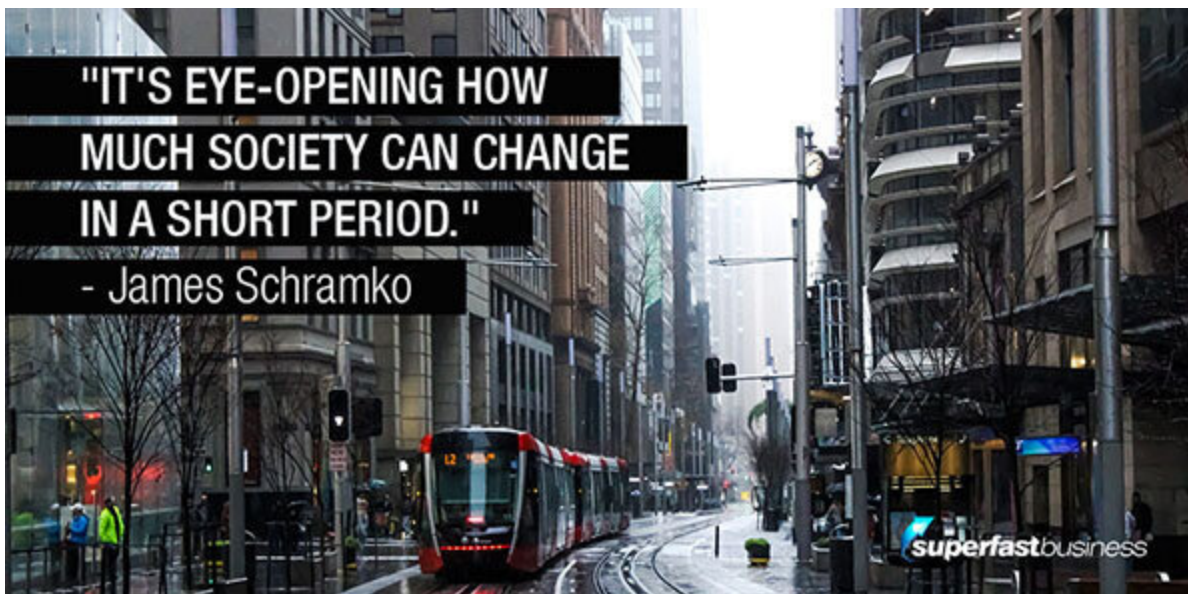
It was really the first time I felt that penned in since [I quit my job](#) in 2008. The lack of being able to change your situation, as an entrepreneur, we're used to having freedoms and controls, and this, basically, being penned in is an undesirable feeling. Anyway, we did apply and got denied, of course. So I'm on day 11 of 14, and I'm almost out, but I wanted to capture this while we're in the moment.

## **The lead-up, and quarantine**

So back to the situation. It has not been easy, you know, our stuff left on the third of September, and we didn't fly to Queensland until October, so we went for a month with nothing, like a couple of frying pans, a futon bed, a surfboard and our car. That was basically it. No couch, no TV. I didn't even have an office chair, I was doing my work on a blow-up ball. And I was using my iMac, which I later put into the car for transport.

So going a month without stuff was really quite challenging, and no childcare, of course, and then still trying to schedule in some work around that. So it got me back to the most basic bare-bones version of business that I've been in for a long time.

The other thing is like, when we applied for the permit, and initially it got denied, because we weren't flying within 72 hours, so then when we got our flights organized, we applied again, and then Queensland shut the border for two weeks. And then when they did open up again, they said, We'll take applications from 8pm. And I suspected there'd be a lot of built-up demand and thousands of people applying. And we applied at nine past eight, and it took them another two weeks to give us an approval.



And there are still people now, I'm 11 days into quarantine, there are people who applied the next day or the day after who still haven't even got close. So this is a crazy situation in our own country, which again, would sound totally bizarre to someone outside Australia that this could happen. But it's certainly been eye-opening for me how much society can change in such a short period.

So, I handed over the keys to my place. We flew up here. We've been in this place now for 11 days. I have not been able to do much work. I've asked some clients to move appointments, I've resigned myself to not, I mean, we don't even watch Netflix. Having a two-year-old who's running around disassembling things or trying to renovate in a small room for two weeks, I mean, can you imagine?

It's just been absolutely challenging, trying to deal with new food, different sleeping arrangements, lack of exercise. I mean, I really want to open that window there, but it doesn't open. So it is a bit suffocating. But we'll get through it.

So basically, they keep calling up to ask how it's going and if we need anything. I tell them, Yes, a balcony or fresh air, and they can't do anything about it. So they have this sort of redundant calls. I think they're calling because several people in the same situation have actually committed suicide.

And when I was reading about it in a Facebook group, I didn't really understand why it would be so hard for them but being in the situation and knowing, like you basically hand over your keys for that door when you come in for two weeks, it is intimidating, and it is frightening. And I imagine for some people, that would really affect them.

So I would definitely say I don't recommend hotel quarantine. If there's any other option, if there was a home quarantine option or a small delay, it's probably better unless you're very strong mentally, because they'll try and break you. This is mental warfare - crappy carbohydrates, sugary food, no fresh air, no sunlight. It's like, what would you want to do if you wanted to get someone sick? You'd put them in that situation. So it's crazy. And then stick everyone together, set in the closest proximity to the virus. Why they don't have home quarantine is astounding to me. It's astounding.

So anyway, we did our tests and everything. And even though we don't have to, legally, for a minor, a two-year-old, until the last thing, when we asked them about that, they basically forced us to do it. They said, No, we have to test everyone in the room. I later checked, and legally, we didn't. So they lied to us. I'm furious about that.

It's an example of where people will bluff or try and pretend that something's mandated, or legal, or lawful, but it isn't, and they're just hoping you just go along with the flow. I still haven't told my parents we're coming. I want to make it a surprise. But it's been very hard keeping a surprise for two weeks, or actually, two months.

This whole thing has been a couple of months leading up to it. So I'll have to have a follow-up and let you know if they find out or not and if we can make it all the way without my parents knowing, and then I can surprise them. Because at the moment, they're very, very sad that we may not be able to see each other for Christmas. So that will be really fun to see.

So I just want to share some lessons that I wanted to get out of the way. And you've been so good about this, Lucy, you've been a good girl.

## Lessons from the whole experience

So basically, it's been really hard to do work. I blocked time when I first thought we were going to go, and then I blocked time the next time I thought we were going to go. And eventually, we did go, and it's like, I've used up my block times, but I've pushed some stuff out till the end of the year. And I don't mind. It's okay if I can't deal with it.

I still haven't worked Fridays and Mondays, because I don't want to do that. And what I have discovered is, my clients are amazing people. They're so flexible. They've carried me and supported me through this, while I'm their coach, but they're so understanding, and they've parted like the Red Sea. They're saying, Let's just catch up when you're out. They actually care, and they want to know how things are going.



As soon as I lost my bed to the removalist, I realized [how important sleep is](#). When I went to that futon, or the temporary mattress, it's like my energy and resilience and focus, it just all went straight off a cliff by 20 or 30 percent. I just cannot overstate this: get good sleep, get a great mattress, have a nice, amazing place to sleep, because sleep is the core for everything. It affects your mood, your productivity, your ability to bounce through challenges.

Know your real friends. I'm in some groups, and I've got friends, but my real friends followed up. They're like, How's it going? They were actually thinking of me. And those people emerged. A small percentage actually come through, and they check in. As I have been with some of my friends who went through quarantine.

Team. My team is just incredible. They've just seamlessly been running for the last few months. Automatically, they will take this video, I'm going to upload it after this. And while I'm babysitting, they're going to edit it and publish it and put it out there. They're just miracle workers. So I want to thank them.

I didn't miss Instagram, I stopped posting to Instagram, I just read Instagram occasionally. But I've stopped creating content and don't miss it at all. So that's good. Apparently, Facebook went down while I've been in here. But again, it doesn't affect my business at all. And that's a huge lesson in [OwnTheRacecourse](#).

You don't need much. We've gone months without much stuff. I've literally just got a little suitcase here, like a bag with some pairs of shorts and T-shirts. I'm representing my local surf shop. Of course Keel Surf Supply, big shout out. But you don't need much stuff. That's really been the refreshing thing.

When we had no stuff and we were still in our house before we travelled, we went to the beach every day, we went to the park every day. We spent a lot of family time. I've had more family time lately than I've ever had any time in my life, like literally 24/7. And it's okay. I'm actually blessed in that regard.

Stay strong. Like, this stuff is inevitable. You have inevitable setbacks. Like, I've been flying along with no drama for a long time, like decades, at least a decade. And this is a hassle. This is a pain in the butt. It's something I have little control over, but I put myself here, I am ultimately responsible.

I could still be sitting in my old place. But I chose to make this move. I chose, hopefully, to be better off in the new scenario, but there is pain on the way there. This is the crawling-over-the-broken-glass phase that is inevitable when you do anything useful or worthwhile. So I'm paying the price.

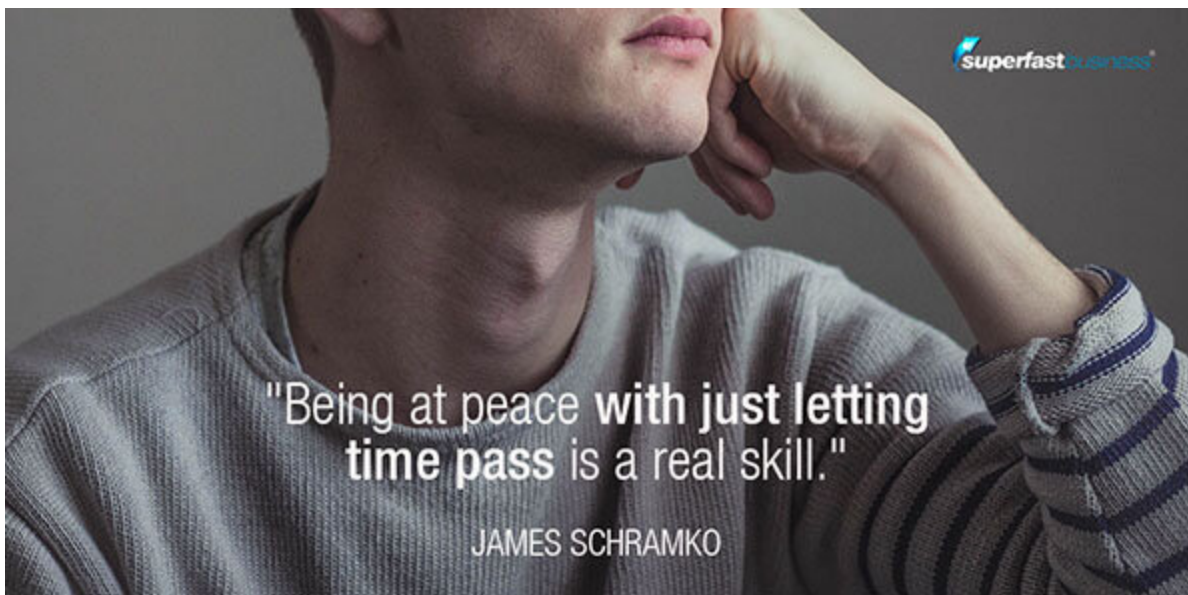
**This goes for business, too**



Same for you in business. If you want that fantastic, amazing business like I have, you have to pay the price. And you have to put in some effort. You have sacrifices along the way. It will not be gifted to you. But I'm only three days away from paying my price, and I'll never look back. And hopefully, I won't repeat this one.

I will be reengineering my business. One thing's clear, I want to have less calls in my schedule. Not that I'm over the top anyway. But those sort of seven, or eight, or nine calls a week, I'd love to pull them back a bit. I really would like a week where I have no calls, or just a couple. And I think that's something I'll engineer for myself for 2022.

I want to take it to the next stage, but not just an iterative version of what I had. I want it all new. So I'm going to whiteboard my business and go fresh. We'll see what gets continued through.



And enjoy the pace. You know, if I was in the [Maldives](#) for two weeks, I'd want it to go slow. If I'm in the hotel quarantine, I want it to go fast. So we can warp our own perception of time. I'm able to just tune out a little bit and just let this go through. I don't have to hit the grog, I don't have to numb myself with Netflix or anything else. I can just be at peace with just letting time pass, and that's a real skill, and one I'd like to teach my two-year-old. But she still knows she can just play there for hours doing something, which is great.

A reasonable episode published is better than a perfect planned episode later. I wanted to publish this right now, two-year-olds and everything. This is real. I'm in my hotel room, sitting on the floor, recording this podcast, because I want this message out. I'm doing this for myself as much for you. This is kind of my therapy.

They offer lots of numbers you can call, but I've got you. I just wanted to share this with you, what I've been going through. And just remember you are strong, you're way stronger. These people won't break us. We can still get our own food. I got an exercise bike. I'm keeping fit. I sit in the sun when it comes out in the afternoon. And we'll get through this. I've been through much worse. And just remember, you've got all the strength you need.

By the way, the Queensland Government, you can do way better than this. This is really a terrible welcoming for new residents. So I did want to put that out there. Every time someone goes on the press, they get an instant home quarantine pass, right?

It's going to be too late when this comes out for me, but I haven't gone down that path because my problem isn't really savage compared to some of the others, I guess. And you've got other gears. A friend of mine, Pete Shaw, posts this recently, but you've got other gears. When you need it, you can tap into that extra gear. It's there for you.

### **It's all about perspective**

Bottom line is this, right, perspective. As difficult as this has been, and as a pain in the butt it's been, I have a fantastic life. And I only have to turn to the news at night to see a child who has lost vision, or suffering leukemia, or has cerebral palsy, like there's so many people who are having it tough and having a difficult time.

So whenever you feel a bit down or sorry for yourself, just remember that you're actually probably in an incredibly fortunate situation. If you have food and shelter, and you're reasonably healthy, you're way better off than the vast population.

So I hope something about this episode sort of inspires you or helps you get through a tough patch. It's probably good for you to know that James, the guy who doesn't have drama or whatever, that surfs every day, still goes through some little speed humps occasionally.

But I just wanted to make this for you. I hope you have a good end of the year. And let's see what 2022 brings, but I know I'll be enjoying some less crowded surfs and being close to family. That's the goal, and I will get there. Speak soon.



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