



Peter Andre



Peter Andre Jensen Norway

My name is Peter Andre and I am 28 years old.

I was born and live in northern Norway, in the town of Tromsø. I am not married, but live with my girlfriend. I have a small computer science business which I run on my own. I learned about the Stene Prize when the Norwegian Rheumatism Association published a feed about it on Twitter. I like writing very much so I decided to participate.

Working with a rheumatic disease – my everyday life

I've never had a day off. I've never left work early. I've never had a lunch break. I've never been on sick leave. I've never been given recognition for my hard work. Who would have given it to me?

I don't have a boss. No colleagues. Nobody works with me. Nobody gives me support during my working day – a workday that never ends.

Or starts.

Well, it does start. My working day starts every day, all week long, every week, all year long, every year, at about 9.30 am. It starts when I'm in bed, where I lie thinking about the fact that my working day has already started and that there's nothing I can do about it. Half an hour later, I am half an hour into my working day. My teeth have now been brushed and my medicines have been swallowed down with half a glass of water. Maybe I've

managed to brew my morning coffee. Maybe I've managed to lie down on the couch. Not so that I can watch TV, but so that I can work.

The couch is where I lie, flat out working. I think if anybody saw me, while I'm lying down working, they would think that I'm just being lazy. There's something very annoying about men lying flat out on a couch. Women can go crazy just looking at men in that position. In extreme situations women can do extreme things. You never know. So I usually pretend to be reading the paper. But I'm not just lying down being lazy, I'm working.

Just a few more minutes and I'll be able to walk to the kitchen in order to turn on the coffee-maker.

During the winter the beginning of my working day can be really challenging. I'm very fragile and very afraid of slipping and falling on the icy roads. It's even worse if I have to shuffle along in the snow. It's quite a challenge. While shuffling in the snow, I think if anybody was watching me while I move around, as if I'm auditioning for 'Brokeback Mountain', they would have a good laugh. I

think it would actually be good if someone did just that. A workday is much easier to handle with a good portion of humour and laughter.

Four hours into my working day, it's four hours into my workday.

My wife calls. She wants to know what's for dinner. As usual, I don't have any good suggestions. I think that I don't really have time to figure out stuff like that. I'm busy working you know. My wife as usual suggests fish. She tells me fish is healthy. I listen to my wife. She generally knows what she's talking about.

I drive to the store. My favourite store has a very appealing ready-made food section with lots of lovely dishes. I think I'm lucky that I get to visit such interesting places while at work. I also have to mention that the parking outside my favourite store is exceptional. The car park is very flat and has lots of room to get in and out of the vehicle. I think that lots of stores could learn something from this one. I've got a trained eye when it comes to car parks. It's a part of my job you might say.



Photos:
Audun Andreassen

“When you think about it, we are all in the same situation, those of us whose work is rheumatism. We never have time off.”

However, I don't have time to absorb the inspiring atmosphere for too long, because I'm at work and I don't have time to mess around.

Later that day my wife makes me clean the dishes. I think that an ordinary workday contains lots of different challenges, and doing the dishes is definitely one of the most difficult ones. Not because the water is too hot, or the dishes too dirty, but because my kitchen bench is too low. I'm forced to take on a bent position. It strains me, but no work is done without sacrifice.

The hot water makes my hands less sore. It feels quite good. I think that if my job had been arthritis, I would have loved doing the dishes. Those whose job is osteoarthritis, always say how good the heat is. Their joints feel better. I envy them a bit, those who work with arthritis, but I also think that their workday is probably just as tough as mine. They don't have a boss either, or colleagues or days off. No, they don't even get to take a single break. When you think about it, we are all in the same situation, those of us whose work is rheumatism. We never have time off.

Eight hours into my working day, it's eight hours into my workday.

I think about that day when I got a few minutes off from my Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). It was a beautiful autumn day a few years back. I woke up with a cut on my forehead. I had passed out and hit one of my mother's flower pots on the way down. I remember a feeling of joy. The blood that came streaming out of my forehead quickly mixed with the spilled dirt from the flower pot, and I

remember thinking that this was the closest to nature that I'd ever come. It feels good to daydream about that small break from my working day.

As I take off my socks and get ready to brush my teeth, I think that it is a lot easier to tear something down, than to build something up. My evening routine is a major part of my job and it can be really challenging sometimes. Teeth must be brushed, medicines must be swallowed, and I think that at times like these, what with the financial crisis and all, we all do what we can to be as efficient as possible. So I swallow my 14 tablets all in one go, and I think that I do what I can to ensure a stable workforce in this country.

Ten hours into my working day, it's ten hours into my workday.

My head is on the pillow. This is one of the most critical moments of my workday. Important decisions are to be made. What book to read today? What direction should my head point? This last issue is a major one, because there is no way back once the decision has been made. A neck stiffens

so quickly. Although I have heard about professional rheumatics who are able to turn over in bed twice, but I think that they are at a totally different stage to me. I'll never get there. Or, who knows? I'm still at the beginning of my career. Maybe I will be able to turn over in bed one day in the future?

I dream about that day as I close my eyes. Not because my working day is over, but because I have to get some rest. Because tomorrow is another day and it brings along another working day that will never end.