



have been practicing our whole lives, but now, thanks to the world's obsession with Northern Europe chic, we have a fancy word to explain it to our overseas friends.



[DISTRACTIONS COST US MORE THAN WE THINK](#)

4-minute read | London School of Economics

Each time you look at your phone, it takes an average of 23 minutes to regain your level of focus. This is bad news for productivity and adds to an alarming amount of data brought together on modern workplaces by the London School of Economics. Nixen shows that it's good to do nothing, but it's probably best to do that when you're not working.

MEET THE COMMUNITY

Each week, we profile a Zoku community member - hit reply if you'd like to be featured!



Marylene Smeets is a Political Affairs Officer with the Caribbean Team of the UN Department of Political and Peace-building Affairs at UN Headquarters in New York. Marylene is also an author who recently published a book about her journey of overcoming Multiple Sclerosis. Marylene has been a regular resident at Zoku over the years and most recently stayed here during her book launch.

What path has your career taken?

My first job was with the UN Verification Mission in Guatemala. I subsequently was employed for five years by the Committee to Protect Journalists, a press freedom organisation in New York. Since 2002, I've been working at UN Headquarters.

What brought you/brings you to Amsterdam?

I'm Dutch and went to grad school in Amsterdam; I still consider that city home. I love coming to Amsterdam to catch up with family and friends, while enjoying old and new favourite hangouts. What also brings me to Amsterdam is the promotion of my Dutch-language book on how I conquered Multiple Sclerosis holistically, which was launched on September 3rd.

How long have you stayed at Zoku, and what were your thoughts?

I've been coming to Zoku regularly since 2017, staying up to six nights at a time. I love Zoku

so much that I recommend it on my website and have dedicated a few Instagram posts to it! I deeply appreciate Zoku's environmental consciousness, affordability, relaxed and cozy vibe, delicious and healthy food, extremely accommodating staff... A fantastic home away from home!

What's a life-changing book, song, film or event you'd like to recommend to others?

The book I just published! I hope that my memoir: '[Genadelees Geschenk](#)', whose title translates from Dutch as Merciless Gift — Unwrapped in New York, can provide support for persons coping with any health challenge. As early readers have confirmed, it is a page-turner for a wider audience. I wrote Merciless Gift in my personal capacity, mostly during an unpaid leave from my job with the UN. It was published in Dutch but I intend for it to be translated into English.

What advice would you give to your 20 year old self?

Go into therapy! It will liberate you from the fears that are preventing you from enjoying your youth to the max.

Which book have you gifted the most, and why?

[Rediscovering the True Self](#) by Ingeborg Bosch. By giving a solid explanation for emotions like anger and guilt, as well as a way to liberate yourself from them, this book has been profoundly helpful to me, so I hoped it could also be beneficial for friends.

Has your time at Zoku helped you in business or in life? If so, how?

Most definitely! It proved a wonderful home base the week of my book launch and presentations. I prepared my talks on the Rooftop Terrace, gave an interview in the Living Room, did a photo shoot in the Greenhouse... And the Zoku staff was astonishingly helpful, even going as far as making an Excel sheet for the electronic payments of the books I sold!

What does home mean to you?

Home to me means a place where I feel fully comfortable, where I can restore and where I'm happy. Zoku meets all those criteria!

[Marylene's Website](#)

FOR YOUR AGENDA...

[WISDOM IN BUSINESS 2019](#)

Learn about Conscious Leadership, The Power of Doing Good and Stress-free Organisations.
Fri 04 Oct, 09.00 - 19.00 | Westergasfabriek B.V., Amsterdam

[THE LOST SUPPER](#)

Revive the art of the shared meal and join a dinner at Zoku to reconnect by disconnecting.
Tue 08 Oct, 19.30 - 22.00 | Zoku
