THE
ENJOYABLE
COMPANY

MAKING WORK WORK IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

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MICHAL MATLON

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT ENJOYABLE WORK

We had the idea to create a publication on "joyful work" during the first months of the 2020 coronavirus lockdown. Back then, we had just finished a series of open conversations with leaders and thinkers on how they were dealing with the rapidly evolving reality of the pandemic. These "Corona Consolation Sessions" yielded many interesting and important ideas.

But among them, one idea was crucial. The pandemic pushed us to make much-needed changes to the way we live and work. Even before Corona, we had witnessed concerning numbers coming out of studies and surveys: Two-thirds of employees were shown to be disengaged at work, feeling a lack of connection to their organizations[1]. And about a half of the workers felt no sense of purpose in their work or were unsure about it[2].

The worldwide pandemic has shown that many things previously thought impossible became possible almost overnight. Remote working and increased control over their work time gave many people the chance to design their days according to their needs and preferences.

Many others, however, had a harder time coping at the beginning. Working from home showed to be not a perfect fit for everyone, especially people with children, attending school remotely too. Organizations didn't always support people in equipping their home office properly, with many spending their days in uncomfortable and unergonomic positions. And apart from that, it was a new experience for almost everyone, with different people being able to cope on a different level.

As the restrictions came down temporarily, some companies have already started trying to return back to normal – not an ideal situation in the first place. For many employees, this meant that in some way, they were suddenly losing part of their newly found freedom. And many took it as a cue to abstain from coming back to the workplace, or even from work itself. It quickly became clear that a return to the pre-pandemic normal was no longer possible. The whole field had undergone a profound transformation and personal choice became the new basic expectation.

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1   Harter, B. J. (2021b, December 6). Employee Engagement on the Rise in the U.S. Gallup.Com. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://news.gallup.com/poll/241649/employee-engagement-rise.aspx

2   Dahlgreen, W. (2015, August 12). 37% of British workers think their jobs are meaningless. YouGov. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2015/08/12/british-jobs-meaningless

This prompted us to look deeper into this issue. If there's still such a strong urge to regain control over the situation and avoid change, maybe we need to consciously rethink and clearly communicate the new desired future of work. So that anyone willing to make this desired future a reality, can find a guide to inspire their action.

In our 20 years of working with organizations of all kinds and sizes, we always started by asking deep questions. The answers to those questions usually led to profound changes in our clients' orga-

"Comparison is the death of joy."

-Mark Twain

nizations, their strategies, culture, workplaces, products, or services.

With this publication, it's no different. Over the past year, we have asked ourselves, and many of our partners and friends, questions that focused on the nature and purpose of work. We wanted to arrive at an answer, which could serve as a beacon for today's changemakers.

We have arrived at a simple, yet bold and controversial answer: Work is here for us to enjoy.

If we can agree on this simple statement, a vast world of implications appears behind it. Because if we truly want to design our organizations to enable joyful work, we will need to change many things about how we run them and how we lead our people.

Fortunately, research[3] already shows that companies guided by this simple principle gain a sustainable competitive advantage, be it improved business results, improved talent attraction, employee retention, customer loyalty, and even innovation[4].

When your employees truly enjoy their work and feel they are a genuine part of your organization, they bring their full, authentic selves to the workplace. And with them, their full potential, dedicated to the common goals of your organization.

Joy is the most fundamental thing we, as people, want to experience. We claim that companies exist to fulfill this purpose. Successful business developments and innovations will follow. And with them, financial success. We made this guide for the owners, leaders, and courageous individuals who want to make this vision a reality.

3   Bailey, C., Madden, A., Alfes, K., & Fletcher, L. (2015). The Meaning, Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Engagement: A Narrative Synthesis. International Journal of Management Reviews, 19(1), 31–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12077

4   Schweyer, A. (2010, January 5). The Economics of Engagement. Incentive Research Foundation. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://theirf.org/research/the-economics-of-engagement/206/

JOY:
MAKING WORK WORK FOR EVERYONE

MARKUS PESCHL
OLIVER LUKITSCH

When people talk about joy, they often have in mind a rather superficial form of happiness. But on the following pages, we are not going to talk about mere happiness or fun at work. For us, joy is not so much about having a pleasurable moment or a happy experience. We think of joy similarly to how Aristotle saw it: joy is caused by things or situations that make our lives better on a deeper level. He called it "eudaimonia" - a life of virtuous activity leading to the fulfillment of our capacities and potentials[1].

"A passive but contented couch potato may be getting what he wants, and he may enjoy it. But he would not, on Aristotelian and other objective list theories, count as doing well, or leading a happy life."[2]

EUDAIMONIA: THE FINAL PURPOSE OF LIFE

It seems to be undisputed that every human being strives for living a good life. Living a life full of happiness turns out to be our final goal. So, what makes a good life the ultimate purpose of human existence? Our old friend Aristotle developed a few criteria for judging if something is worth being the ultimate goal of our life.

1. First, he emphasizes that the final goal has to be pursued for its own sake. It means that we enjoy it for what it is, and we are not using it to achieve something else. Wealth, for example, is

1   Aristotle (1991). Nicomachean ethics (fourth ed.). In J. Barnes and Aristotle (Eds.), The complete works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford Translation (Vol 2) Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

2   Haybron, D (2020). Happiness, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/happiness/.

usually not enjoyed for itself, but as a means to purchase luxury items or gain admiration from others.

2. The final goal has to be complete in the sense that it's enough to make life worth living. It means that achieving this goal will be enough to account for what we could call "living a good life".

3. The final goal also has to be self-sufficient in the following way: it is something that we can achieve or practice on our own, it is not dependent on factors outside of our control. In other words: the final goal probably lies inside of us, since, even in situations when we have lost control over "outside conditions", we can maintain control over our mind and attitude.

Aristotle shows that eudaimonia satisfies these criteria. It can be translated as happiness, as living a flourishing life, living well, or as having a good life. Eudaimonia is an activity leading to profound happiness because this kind of life is lived in line with our virtues and through realizing our purpose and potential.

In other words: eudaimonia means living in positive resonance with ourselves, our surroundings, and our potentials. And it will not happen on its own. You might be a talented artist, for example, but to live accordingly means to hone and refine your artistic skills, to learn and grow. It also can't be achieved in hours or days but will take a whole lifetime, and for a good reason, because it's the ultimate

value providing us with direction and orientation in life.

Based on this, we can see that this kind of joy is closely related to the experience of agency and autonomy. Agency and autonomy mean being able to engage with our environment purposefully and proactively, instead of only reacting to what comes our way. We need to experience ourselves as the authors of change in our lives and see our impact on others.

THE JOY OF CONTROL

There's also a simpler version of enjoying life. We encounter it when a child first learns to walk or manages to go to the bathroom on its own. Our everyday lives are full of little success stories to which we can pay attention and which we can enjoy. Some traditions, such as Buddhism, value-conscious attention to everyday things highly, claiming there is a more profound, existential happiness to be revealed if we do things mindfully.

In the world of work, imagine a skilled craftsman who performs a task to perfection while being deeply immersed, engaged, and exhaustively focused. It's an idea we cherish but seldom live up to. In our fast-paced world, staying focused is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible. In our work, rather than finding ourselves in a state of flow[3], we find ourselves in a state of dispersion most of the

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3 Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). The concept of flow. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology (pp. 89–105). Oxford University Press.

time, since we must answer to the complexities of our digitized work lives and

activity, the better we can predict what will happen. As a result, we experience an increasing sense of control over what we are doing. The simpler the activity, the easier it is to become an expert in it.

"Happiness eludes us exactly and precisely to the extent that we forcefully intend it. But it arises automatically when we live out our self-transcendence, be it in work, be it in love. Happiness is an outcome that cannot be forced."

-Viktor Frankl

So do we enjoy being successful creatures of habit? And do we perhaps even need this to have an experience of self-agency? Is simple, mechanical work the best way to reconnect with ourselves and enter an immersive flow as we work?

the head-on engagement of uncertainty.

At first glance, this may mean that repetitive, mechanical work would be best geared to avoid our modern-day dispersion and digital distractions by allowing us to fully engage in predictable exercises. At least at first glance, neuroscience also seems to confirm this.

When acting in situations that are well known and familiar to us, we can experience flow because we can predict the course of our actions[4]. Furthermore, we experience ourselves in control only when we can predict the effects of our actions[5].

But most importantly, we might only experience what we do as our own actions because we can predict their impact[6]. The more skilled we get in a certain

THE JOY OF TAKING OWNERSHIP

As you might have guessed, it's not that simple. While being an expert helps us to enter a state of flow, highly automatic activities, like repetitive work, can also make us feel detached and alienated – we're running on autopilot. We might even develop a sense of being passive observers of the situation. In extreme cases, we can even feel like we no longer control our bodies ourselves[7].

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4   Nahmias, E. (2005). Agency, authorship, and illusion. Consciousness and Cognition, 14(4), 771–785. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2005.07.002

5   Pacherie, E. (2007). The Sense of Control and the Sense of Agency. Psyche, 13(1). https://jeannicod.ccsd.cnrs.fr/ijn_00352565

6   Haggard, P. (2017). Sense of agency in the human brain. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 18(4), 196–207. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn.2017.14

7   de Haan, S., & Fuchs, T. (2010). The Ghost in the Machine: Disembodiment in Schizophrenia – Two Case Studies. Psychopathology, 43(5), 327–333. https://doi.org/10.1159/000319402

To avoid these unpleasant feelings, we need to act on a background of uncertainty[8]. After all, we only need to pay attention to our actions when we can't rely on our brain's automation. So actually, the kind of joy we are looking for emerges when we have to pay close attention to what we're doing, precisely because our task is somehow new or unpredictable[9]. The experience of self-agency (and as a consequence, joy) is much more than the experience of being in control. It's the experience of mastering uncertainty.

Remember the child learning to walk? It doesn't feel joyful because it can walk. Rather, the child's joy comes from the process of learning how to walk. The child experiences self-appropriation and has a sense of ownership of its body and movements. Precisely this experience of "I am in charge" anchors us in the moment. It is a basic foundation for experiencing joy and thus joyful work in the later stages of our lives.

THE JOY OF LOVING OTHERS

By now, you know that deep joy requires that we first accept uncertainty and that we can grow by overcoming it. There is also another situation in which we need to accept our limits of control and self-determination: loving another person.

To love another person involves "letting be", the most fundamental form of human knowledge[10]. To love is to know another person in a way that allows them to be themselves. In our usual way of thinking, we often impose our own understanding of others on them. But to love another person is to let them be as they are, to love them for who they are. Most importantly, some would say that loving others in this way is the most fundamental source of joy.

The ability to "let be" is not only conducive to romantic relationships. We think that managers and their employees can benefit significantly from learning to let others be who they are and training themselves to enjoy and support the characteristics of others.

THE JOY OF WORKING

While manual work was not very valued in ancient Greece, this has changed dramatically in modern times. Producing, making, and fabricating have become key characteristics of homo Faber and enjoy the highest social recognition[11].

Productivity, efficiency, and optimization are the ideals and goals of working. However, it's no longer the purpose or

8   Lukitsch, O. (2020). Effort, Uncertainty, and the Sense of Agency. Review of Philosophy and Psychology, 11(4), 955–975. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-020-00486-6
9   Gerrans, P. (2014). The measure of madness: Philosophy of mind, cognitive neuroscience, and delusional thought. MIT Press.
10 de Jaegher, H. (2019). Loving and knowing: reflections for an engaged epistemology. Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 20(5), 847–870. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-019-09634-5
11 Arendt, H. (2007). Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben. Piper Verlag.

usefulness of the product that counts, but it's productivity for the sake of productivity, and as a consequence, personal well-being experienced from producing and consuming. Another consequence of modern work: the division of labor – splitting and assigning different parts of a production process or task to different people to improve efficiency – has led us to often lose a sense of purpose at work.

In complex work environments, workers can no longer see and understand their particular contribution to the overall purpose of the organization they work for. This alienation from purpose[12] has increased even more in modern working environments that are driven by automation, hyper standardized and uniform work processes, excessive division of labor (as in globally distributed value

"We mistake leisure for idleness and work for creativity."

-Josef Pieper

chains and production networks), as well as in work environments where cognitive technologies are restricting original human thinking to a minimum.

Far away from the concept of eudaimonia, work, productivity, and efficiency have become ends in themselves.

Contemplation is considered unnecessary, or even an obstacle to productivity. Our most valuable human activities, such as original thinking, participatory sense-making, reflection, and social relations are outsourced to cognitive machines. In some instances, they are even regarded as undesirable[13].

WORK, EUDAIMONIA, AND RE:CREATION

In contrast to a society driven by efficiency, productivity, and speed, we propose an alternative approach to work and how to relate it to joy. We introduce the concept of re:creation. In its everyday meaning, recreation means an activity done for our enjoyment, usually when we don't have to work. We suggest digging deeper, however, as there is much more to it than the rather superficial aspects of wellness, pleasure, play, and entertainment.

We can find some hints about its deeper meaning in its Latin roots. Recreation is derived from the Latin word "recreare"; "re-" is a prefix and means "again"; "creare" can be translated to create, bring into being, or give birth to. Etymologically speaking, recreare has various connotations, such as to restore, recover (from

12 Smith, A., & Fressoli, M. (2021). Post-automation. Futures, 132, 102778. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102778
13 Vidovic, P. and M.F. Peschl (2020). The design and enaction of digitalised environments. Ramifications of digital transformation for creativity, innovation, and humanism. In J. Fritz and N. Tomaschek (Eds.), Digitaler Humanismus. Menschliche Werte in der virtuellen Welt, pp. 41–57. Münster: Waxmann.

illness), refresh one's strength and spirits after work, to make new, or to revive.

There is a clear relationship between recreation and joy, leisure, and play. However, we don't want to limit our understanding of recreation to relaxing, or just amusement. In the context of eudaimonia, creativity, and innovation, we want to focus on the aspects of renewal and bringing something to life, of bringing forth novelty, and of making something new as an activity that is not necessarily driven by functionality and efficiency. Inherent in this understanding of re:creation is the concept of leisure.

the imperative of working for the sake of working.

Today, leisure is often reduced to a means for increasing our productivity at work (like nap rooms in the office, or cozy coffee lounges that invite you to have "informal" meetings).

However, Aristotle warns us that leisure should not be confused with amusement or „doing nothing". He says that leisure is related to a more contemplative activity, to eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is a „purposeless activity", undertaken for the sake of itself and leading to a state of internal rest, "contemplation", or resonance with

> "We should be able, not only to work well but to use leisure well; for, as I must repeat once again, the first principle of all action is leisure. Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation and is its end; and therefore the question must be asked, what ought we to do when at leisure?"
>
> -Aristotle, Politics 8

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEISURE FOR LEADING A GOOD LIFE

Aristotle makes an astonishing remark that might sound a bit counterintuitive for our time. He claims that we are working for the sake of leisure and that leisure is the final cause of work. In a way, he has reversed today's order, which is driven by

ourselves. Leisure understood in such a sense doesn't aim for a product, an outcome, or some other accomplishment. If something interesting or purposeful arises out of these activities, this product or outcome should be considered a by-product.

If we want to create a future where everyone can engage in joyful work we need to embrace Eudaimonia and look at how to apply it in our organizations.

In this sense, work can't be undertaken by following purely functional and mechanistic routines. Deep insights and new

knowledge have to be seen as by-products that have emerged from a state of leisure or re:creation. They are not the result of what we would call productive work. Leisure and contemplation need to become a prerequisite for purposeful work, which aims at bringing about a more meaningful world.

This perspective is not only supported by philosophy, but also by recent findings in neuroscience and cognitive science. Just to name a few, there is evidence that creativity has its roots in the brain's resting states as well as meditative activities[14], or that creativity emerges from a subtle oscillation between divergent and convergent thinking, between conscious and unconscious brain processes and relaxed brain states[15]. Studies also show that the level of creative problem solving is increased in natural and silent environments, as explained in the so-called Attention Restoration theory and through activation of the default mode brain network, active during rest[16].

It seems that looking towards the future of our global society, traumatized by the pandemic and loss of purpose, striving for a joyful and meaningful life for everyone is the way forward. In this report, we will show you how to create conditions so that joy can emerge in your organization.

Based on our more than 20 years of experience working with organizations of all kinds and sizes, we have learned that

putting energy into applying the principles you'll find on the following pages, will make a big difference – not just for the quality of life of your employees, but also for the success of your organization itself.

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14   Tang, Y., B.K. Hölzl, and M.I. Posner (2015). The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation. Nature Reviews Neuroscience 15(4), 213–225.

15   Maldonato, M., S. Dell'Orco, and A. Esposito (2016). The emergence of creativity. World Futures 72(7–8), 319–326.

SELF-DETERMINATION

PRESENCE

PLAYFULNESS

GOAL ORIENTATION

AUTHENTICITY

PURPOSE

LIBRARY

Here, you will find our curated selection of inspirational books that will make you think, as well as provide you with additional practical guidelines on designing joyful work and organizations.

1

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE CRAZY AT WORK

Jason Fried, David Heinemeier Hansson
Long hours, excessive workload, and a lack of sleep have become a badge of honor for modern professionals. But it should be a mark of stupidity, the authors argue. They show us how to build a calm company, based on their practice at Basecamp.

2

MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

Viktor Frankl
A classic autobiography of survival and finding meaning in difficult times. Viktor Frankl's story is filled with learnings about the strength of purpose to drive humans in all conditions.

3

BULLSHIT JOBS: A THEORY

David Graeber
Graeber's original article on Bullshit Jobs generated such a response, that stories people sent in response allowed him to create a fascinating anthropological portrait of the different ways a job can deprive us of purpose.

4

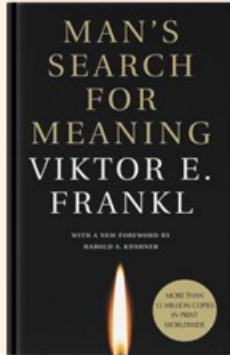## HOW TO CHANGE YOUR MIND: THE NEW SCIENCE OF PSYCHEDELICS

Michael Pollan
In an age of ever-increasing complexity, people are losing connection to themselves and the world as a whole. And with it, the ability to enjoy life deeply. A growing number of scientists and therapists argue that psychedelic experiences might provide an answer to this problem.
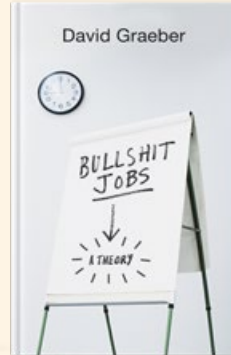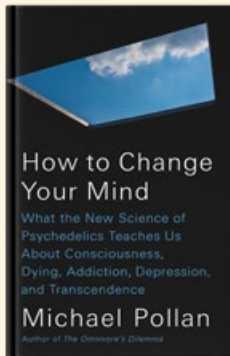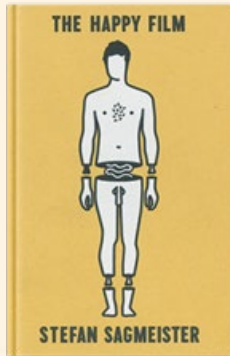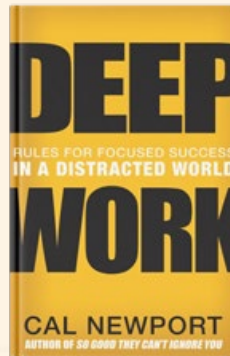
1. It Doesn't Have to Be Crazy at Work

2. Man's Search for Meaning — Viktor E. Frankl

3. Bullshit Jobs: A Theory — David Graeber

4. How to Change Your Mind — Michael Pollan

5. The Happy Film — Stefan Sagmeister

6. Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World — Cal Newport

7. Joy, Inc.: How We Built a Workplace People Love — Richard Sheridan

8. Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being — Martin E.P. Seligman

9. The Science of Meditation: How to Change Your Brain, Mind and Body — Daniel Goleman & Richard J. Davidson

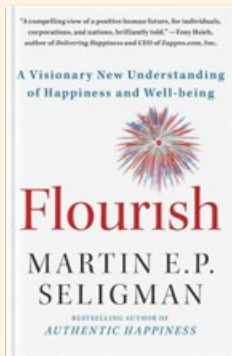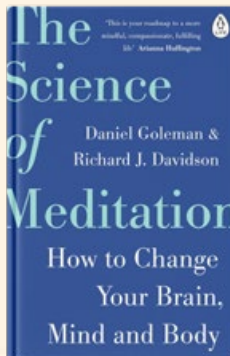**10.** A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy — William B. Irvine

5

THE HAPPY FILM: A PITCHBOOK

Stefan Sagmeister

In recent years, Austrian designer Stefan Sagmeister has spent his time by understanding and communicating abstract but important topics, such as beauty or happiness. The Happy Film is a collection of ancient wisdom, science, design, and his own observations about this topic.

6

DEEP WORK: RULES FOR FOCUSED SUCCESS IN A DISTRACTED WORLD

Cal Newport

Focus is a key factor for excellence in almost any area of work. Not only that, it's deeply tied to our ability to enjoy what we do. In his book, Cal Newport shows us not only why, but how to finally break free from distractions and do what we are good at.

7

JOY, INC: HOW WE BUILT A WORKPLACE PEOPLE LOVE

Richard Sheridan

Menlo Innovations, a small software company, has become a model to many others, in regards to creating an enjoyable workplace. Their CEO Rich Sheridan describes how they achieved this and what were the results.

8

FLOURISH: A VISIONARY NEW UNDERSTANDING OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

Martin Seligman

Seligman started the field of positive psychology as a way to shed the light of science on what makes life worth living. In Flourish, he presents the current evidence and practical ways of increasing our happiness and enjoyment of life.

9

THE SCIENCE OF MEDITATION: HOW TO CHANGE YOUR BRAIN, MIND AND BODY

Daniel Goleman, Richard J. Davidson

Harvard scientists Daniel Goleman and Richard Davidson explain the research on the benefits of meditation and give guidelines on improving your meditation practice.

10

A GUIDE TO GOOD LIFE: THE ANCIENT ART OF STOIC JOY

William Irvine

An ongoing renaissance of stoicism prompts us to revisit this ancient philosophy and its relevance for the modern age. With many misconceptions about this topic, Irvine's authoritative and understandable guide is a good start for anyone interested in applying stoic principles to their life.

OPINION

MARKUS PESCHL

WILL THE FUTURE SOCIETY RUN OUT OF WORK AND PURPOSE?

Where human labor is still needed, work is becoming either highly standardized, repetitive, or specialized. Many workers have almost become "human automatons", and their working tasks and patterns are not contributing a lot to their self-actualization. Much rather to frustration and depression.

Let's imagine what a better future could look like. Multiple thinkers actually believe that we should push automation even further[1]. Work should become as automated as possible – not just as long as it's economically profitable. This way, we could move to a kind of post-capitalist economy[2], which might be better equipped to manage structural issues in our society today. It could help us solve underemployment, unemployment, ecological degradation, and falling profitability.

The term used for this kind of society is Fully Automated Luxury Communism (FALC) and was described by Aaron Bastani in 2019[3]. However, this idea is not new. If you are a fan of Star Trek, you can probably recognize this idea in the series, where all everyday goods are readily available through devices called Replicators. It's also known as the Post-scarcity Economy, where social status is no longer dependent on wealth, but on other qualities, such as goodwill and reputation.

FALC argues that automation, when its benefits are distributed fairly throughout society, will deliver an abundance of useful goods and services at diminishing marginal costs. It's also supposed to liberate people from unenjoyable work and enable them to enjoy purposeful lives of their choosing[4]. Universal basic income, a reduction of working hours, a shift to more personal development and fulfillment could be key ingredients of such a scenario.

However, a scenario in which classical forms of work will disappear has to be seen with a critical eye as well. It will not only have a crucial impact on the economical but above all on a societal and personal level. Work is one of the most

1   Rifkin, J. (2004). The end of work (new ed.). New York: Putnam.
2   Mason, P. (2015). Postcapitalism. A guide to our future. UK: Penguin Books, Random House.
3   Aaron Bastani (2019). Fully Automated Luxury Communism. New York: Verso.
4   Smith, A. and M. Fressoli (2021). Post-automation. Futures 132 (September 2021), 1–13.

OPINION

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MARKUS PESCHL

fundamental activities of a human person and it is far from clear what could take its role (and how) if it is to be abandoned.

Only a very limited number of people will have the privilege to work in a ready-made job (in the classical sense) that offers them purpose and an opportunity for self-actualization, and that is intellectually and socially both challenging and inspiring. Apart from jobs in the social, hospitality, and caring industries, these jobs would most probably require highly sophisticated cognitive and creative skills[5], such as conceptualizing artificial intelligence systems[6], creative problem solving[7], knowledge and meaning creation, or strategy/leadership skills[8].

Such a change would then require great effort to radically change the educational system so that people are taught to proactively create their own "jobs" – by doing what is meaningful and fulfilling for them. The question is, if we, as a society, are open and ready for such a radical shift.

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5   Frey, C.B. and M.A. Osborne (2013). The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation. Oxford: Oxford University.
6   OECD (2021). The impact of Artificial Intelligence on the labour market. What do we know so far?. Paris: OECD. (256).
7   World Economic Forum (2020). Jobs of tomorrow. Mapping opportunity in the new economy. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
8   BBVA Open Mind Book (2019). Work in the age of data. Madrid: BBVA Open Mind Book. (12).

HOW TO MAKE YOUR ORGANIZATION ENJOYABLE

MARKUS PESCHL

Up until this point, we have talked about the importance and nature of joy. We also said that to make work joyful, it's necessary to bring purpose back to work. As we have seen, joy is not just about feeling well, having fun, or satisfying superficial needs. Rather, joy is about engaging in meaningful activities that contribute both to self-actualization and to bringing new meaning and purpose to the world and our organizations.

It has become clear that in general, material or financial rewards don't necessarily lead to more joy beyond hygienic levels, and they don't ensure lasting and sustainable satisfaction or employees' loyalty. What has turned out to be more important is that a job provides purpose and meaning to the employees.

Such a working environment makes employees give the best of their efforts, as well as lets them grow beyond their possibilities and limits of their official duties and job descriptions. It also empowers them to become highly creative and innovative because they know how their work contributes to the bigger picture and that they are part of fulfilling a larger purpose.

As leaders, we have the responsibility to not only care about the financial performance of an organization but also to make it a joyful place to work for everybody, by focusing on purpose and self-actualization. Based on our more theoretical considerations, the following points are the most important principles and guidelines for putting them into practice:

1. Be alive and enable agency: Being alive is one of the most fundamental experiences of every human person. It implies a sense of agency. People feel they can change something within them and around them. They experience themselves as the authors of their actions and see their actual impact.

Leaders need to provide an environment in which employees are not limited to pseudo-agency, but where they must both take responsibility and earn recognition for their successful actions. This is a part of what we call creating Enabling Spaces[1] – work environments and an or-

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[1] Peschl, M.F. and T. Fundneider (2012). Spaces enabling game-changing and sustaining innovations: Why space matters for knowledge creation and innovation. Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change (OTSC) 9(1), 41–61.

ganizational design that support people's agency and which are alive themselves[2].

2. Create a sense of ownership and autonomy: Related to the previous point, it's important to give employees a sense of ownership and autonomy in their tasks and daily work. Both contribute to an experience of being in control, leading not only to employees' self-actualization but also to a higher level of identification and engagement with their company.

While giving up control can sometimes be difficult for leaders, many studies[3] show that replacing a controlling attitude with an enabling mindset has positive effects on performance, creativity, and innovation in an organization[4].

3. Design meaningful workplaces based on purpose: As we have seen above, creating a meaningful workplace is closely linked to the human longing for eudaimonia. This means that leaders have to organize work in such a way that the employees can fulfill their potentials and capacities.

In the best case, employees will find a connection between their own highest purpose and the purpose of the company they are working for. It's the leader's task to support their employees in this pro-

cess and make this connection. Ideally, each employee should have an understanding of what is their particular added value for the user in the overall value creation process[5].

To achieve that, a leader has to offer orientation and direction. For instance, by clearly and transparently communicating and exemplifying the company's purpose and objectives as well as by demonstrating an integrative, holistic, and ecosystems perspective covering every point in the value chain.

Personal coaching, well-designed onboarding processes, or stakeholder-specific workshops are additional means to achieve this kind of engagement and alignment leading to employees' more joyful work experiences and higher levels of job satisfaction.

4. Spur healthy social interactions and a sense of belonging: Humans are not only cognitive beings but first and foremost social beings. Hence, apart from purposeful work, social interaction and a healthy social environment are critical for a joyful workplace.

In this context, trust and strong social ties are key drivers leading to a sense of belonging, as well as to an experience of

2   Peschl, M.F. and T. Fundneider (2014). Designing and enabling interfaces for collaborative knowledge creation and innovation. From managing to enabling innovation as socio-epistemological technology. Computers and Human Behavior 37, 346–359.

3   Cable, D. and F. Vermeulen (2018). Making work meaningful: A leader's guide. McKinsey Quarterly 2018 (October), 1–9.

4   Peschl, M.F. and T. Fundneider (2017). Uncertainty and opportunity as drivers for re-thinking management: Future-oriented organizations by going beyond a mechanistic culture in organizations. In W. Küpers, S. Sonnenburg, and M. Zierold (Eds.), ReThinking Management: Perspectives and impacts of cultural turns and beyond, pp. 79–96. Wiesbaden: Springer.

5   Shattering the status quo: A conversation with Haier's Zhang Ruimin. (2021, July 27). McKinsey & Company. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/shattering-the-status-quo-a-conversation-with-haiers-zhang-ruimin

being accepted, welcomed, and valued. That, in turn, increases the level of employee well-being and engagement.

Participatory sense-making is one of the key activities of humans[6], and it is also one of the key activities of every organization. It has both a cognitive part ("sense-making") and a social aspect ("participatory"). Leaders are in charge of creating an environment in which the combination of these aspects can lead to joyful and inspiring forms of collaboration, creativity, innovation, and decision-making processes.

It's the harmonious and thoughtful integration of these aspects, as well as a leader's open mindset, which leads to deep insights and interesting results both on an individual and on an organizational level[7].

5. Allow being confronted with the unexpected in a safe space and nourish creativity: One of the reasons why we fear uncertainty is that we don't expect it, and we lack understanding of the unexpected situation. As a consequence, we cannot predict the future and the implications of our actions. The experience of uncertainty can lead to a sense of anxiety or loss of control. However, it can be transformed through direct confrontation with this uncertain reality in a safe environment by closely engaging with it. In such an environment, we can react to these uncertain situations with a mindset of observation.

Trying to make sense of what is really happening around us on a deeper level and reflecting on our patterns of perception are all instruments leading to a more profound level of understanding.

In most cases, this understanding will reduce the level of uncertainty and anxiety. It will bring forth alternative and creative perspectives opening new ways of dealing with uncertain phenomena or situations. Uncertainty then becomes a source of creativity.

If this happens in a safe organizational environment, employees will not only regain their sense of agency, but also experience self-actualization. They will feel alive and fulfilled with eudaimonia, as being creative is both a highly challenging and at the same time satisfying activity.

Again, it's the leader's job to create such a safe and enabling environment where mistakes, failures, or sometimes risky decisions are seen as learning experiences, rather than something to be sanctioned.

6. Develop a proactive and future-oriented mindset: In most companies, we find a mindset, which is driven by highly standardized processes. While standardization itself is not a bad thing (it provides stability, security, and efficiency), we have to keep in mind that these processes are mainly determined by past experiences, are mostly reactive, and do not contribute a lot to employees´ self-fulfillment.

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6   De Jaegher, H. and E. Di Paolo (2007). Participatory sense-making. An enactive approach to social cognition. Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences 6(4), 485–507.
7   De Jaegher, H. (2019). Loving and knowing: reflections for an engaged epistemology. Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences 2019.

They are not only the result of reacting to changes in the company's environment but also the way they have been designed was mostly driven by the past – they are extrapolations from the past into the future[8].

In most cases, this leads to alienation from purpose, because activities are highly automatized and standardized. They can be executed without knowing why and there is little motivation to truly tackle the challenges of the future.

Such a mindset is not in line with what eudaimonia is about and doesn't promote a fulfilling and joyful work environment. In a sense, eudaimonia is always oriented and pointing towards the future. It has a lot to do with actively co-shaping the future by realizing its potentials.

Eudaimonia, similarly to innovation-driven companies, is about future-making[9]. It's about engaging in a future-oriented mindset of both an organization and its employees who proactively "learn from the future as it emerges[10]". The role of the leader is to develop in themselves, and later help others develop a future-oriented mindset and skills.

7. Allow for re:creation and slack time: Being efficient might boost the performance of a company in the short term. But as we have seen, an activity that is performed for the sake of itself might lead to a contemplative and restful state of mind, in which the employees are in resonance with themselves.

Results from neuroscience and cognitive science have shown that such a state is a powerful source of creativity and contributes to bringing forth novelty and innovation. Even more so, if it's not explicitly directed towards a product or an outcome.

As an implication, leaders should provide their employees some slack time and space for re:creation, which we described in the previous section. It will not only boost their creativity but also establish an atmosphere in which they don't feel that their creative activities are forced to happen.

8 Peschl, M.F., T. Fundneider, and A. Kulick (2015). On the limitations of classical approaches to innovation. From predicting the future to enabling "thinking from the future as it emerges". In Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development (Ed.), Designing the Future: Economic, Societal and Political Dimensions of Innovation, pp. 454–475. Wien: Echomedia.

9 Wenzel, M., H. Krämer, J. Koch, and A. Reckwitz (2020). Future and Organization Studies: On the rediscovery of a problematic temporal category in organizations. Organization Studies 41(10), 1441–1455.

10 Scharmer, C.O. (2016). Theory U. Leading from the future as it emerges. The social technology of presencing (second ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

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OPINION

OLIVER LUKITSCH

PERVERTED JOY: HOW LONG HOURS BECAME A MEASURE OF PASSION

There is no doubt that joyful work is better than joyless work. However, not everything with the label "joyful", "passion", or "happiness" lives up to its promise. Often, joy is seen as a means to an end, rather than a goal worth pursuing on its own.

There is a major pitfall for any project that aims at increasing people's joy. Companies must act economically, so bringing joy to the office will be driven by economic needs. While this is understandable and necessary, the past has shown that such projects can be counterproductive in the end, both economically and psychologically. They fail to generate real joy, while at the same time depleting employees and diminishing their efficiency.

In the past, joy or passion has been understood as radical commitment[1].

Employees who love their work were expected to sacrifice their need for sleep, hobbies, and relationships to not be distracted while doing what they love so deeply.

However, too much work (in terms of hours) translates into increased rates of illnesses and psychiatric disorders. Studies continuously stress that too much work actually makes an organization less efficient. More work does not translate into more productivity.

There are different reasons why 40+ hour weeks are still the gold standard – even though often considered inefficient. From a certain point of view, there are arguments on the side of employers for keeping fewer people working a longer workweek, especially when it comes to decreasing short-term expenses. However, we want to focus on joy or passion.

Since the 80s, "it was implicitly understood that to "passionate" people, 40-hour weeks were old-fashioned and boring. In the new workplace, people would find their ultimate meaning and happiness in the sheer unrivaled joy of work. They wouldn't want to be anywhere else.[2]"

1   Harter, B. J. (2021, June 25). Historic Drop in Employee Engagement Follows Record Rise. Gallup.Com. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://www.gallup.com/workplace/313313/historic-drop-employee-engagement-follows-record-rise.aspx
2   Robinson, S. (2012, March 14). Bring back the 40-hour work week. Salon. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://www.salon.com/2012/03/14/bring_back_the_40_hour_work_week/

OPINION

OLIVER LUKITSCH

But today, we know that this approach doesn't work for the vast majority of people. Its human toll and long-term impact on performance are higher than its short-term benefits. But if this approach is actually inefficient, where has it started?

It was in the 1950s that arms manufacturers in Silicon Valley discovered a new human resource with great potential. Today, we might call this group of people

> **"If you want rest, you have to take it. You have to resist the lure of busyness, make time for rest, take it seriously, and protect it from a world that is intent on stealing it."**
>
> -Alex Soojung-Kim Pang

"highly gifted, yet autistic" – back then not yet known as "Asperger's syndrome".

These workers were moved by a very strong passion for technology and exploration. They had a special rhythm and disposition to work hours inconceivable to the average employee. Their research occupied them day and night. They were driven by their passion and burning desire to work.

This was also the birth hour of the so-called "geek": a person who puts everything else second and their interest in science and technology first. Companies severely stretched their working hours so that programmers could come in late and work at night. They got rid of dress codes and started cultivating and celebrating the eccentric character of their employees.

This serves as an authentic example of how joyful, passionate work can lead to great economic strength and business success when it's matched to a person's work preferences. In the late 20th century, this example was increasingly seen as a universal blueprint, rather than a unique success story. But in comparison to engineers with Asperger's, most people have vastly different needs regarding their social life, sleep, sport, and also have a variety of competing interests rather than singular passions.

Moreover, inspired by those success stories in Silicon Valley, working long hours started to be seen as a quantitative measure of "passion". If your employees can work long hours, they are also passionate about what they do. Or so managers thought.

But rather than using that measure post hoc, companies created an environ-

OPINION

OLIVER LUKITSCH

ment that supported sanctioning people who spend less time in their offices. Building offices like a substitute-home, with fitness centers and sleeping cells, strongly suggests that employees should stay, rather than leave after work is done.

The mentality of working long hours (sometimes doubling 40 hours) took over the tech sector and later, several other industries in the US.

In Europe, working hours are well regulated, but 40+ hour weeks are still common, especially at the higher rungs of the career ladder and in sectors such as finance, law firms, consulting, and more generally in middle management. Rest assured, it will only bring joy to a minority of employees – and will deplete the majority of their labor resources.

Bottom line: An enthusiastic minority expresses its joy through uncompromising devotion. Many, however, seek their joy in moderate, frugal work and lose it again when they cannot pursue other things in life. It's an important fact to remember, for just because your employees don't want to work more or even less than 40 hours doesn't mean they don't enjoy their work. And they might be even better at their tasks when given the opportunity to live a full life outside of their job.

"There's a certain joy of failing, which relates to the process of a child learning to walk. It's learning to walk by falling. And I think if a child would not enjoy falling, it wouldn't be motivated to try and take the next step. I think this principle is still valid for adults. And what I teach my students first, is to enjoy failing, because failure is nothing negative and a basic condition enabling a learning process out of your comfort zone."

VERONIKA MAYERBÖCK

**Lighting Designer,
Head of ALLES oder Licht**

Veronika is a lighting designer and architect based in Vienna. She studied Architecture at TU-Graz and Ècole d'Architecture de Lyon, followed by first experiences at Laurent Fachard. Later, she worked as a lighting designer for several practices in Vienna. Her studio Alles oder Licht now focuses on lighting design for architecture and museums. She also teaches at TU-Wien, TU-Graz, and runs international lighting workshops.

"What I find particularly joyful is when I've worked with someone, and something emerges where you cannot tell who actually made it. It's somehow a contribution from here, a contribution from there, from which something emerges that is greater than each individual in the process."

"I like Winnicott's idea of the Potential Space. He describes it as a space between a mother and a child. The child plays with something and completely forgets about itself and its own ego. But it's critical that the mother is nearby and keeps the space safe and open, without interfering in the child's activities. For me, this can be my partner at home, working in a coffee house, or a library. No one's going to bother me and the calm constant noise signals safety: as long as it doesn't stop, or become loud and hectic, I can let go and even get carried away."

ROBERT BAUER

Associate Professor of Organization and Innovation at Johannes Kepler University

Robert is an Associate Professor at Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria. His research focuses on innovation, explaining and shaping creative processes. He is interested in digital economies and crowd-based organizing. For several years, Robert was a visiting professor at Toronto's Rotman School of Management, a leading institution in the field of Design Thinking. His works have appeared in German and international books and journals, such as Information Systems Journal, Organization, and Organization Science.

ULRICH KERBER

CEO of Freudenberg Real Estate Management Gmbh/ Head Corporate Real Estate

Ulrich is a creative and action-oriented leader with more than 25 years of experience in the construction and real estate services industries. He is passionate about the future of work and its impact on leadership and the workplace. Ulrich has co-created a new framework for leading in complex environments called Digital–Emotional Leadership. He lectures at the ZHAW in Zurich and at the Hochschule Luzern on Workplace Management and Corporate Real Estate Management.

"Surveys show that throughout the world, more than two-thirds of people do not have an emotional attachment to the company. This is a huge number, given that the largest item in our balance sheet is personal costs. We are paying people in our companies to bring the best of their experience, knowledge, and personality into our organizations. And it goes without saying that if you're emotionally not attached to something and you don't really bring your heart into what you do, a huge part of the human potential, and most likely one of the most important ones, remains untapped.

If we want to create a joyful working environment, for example by providing people with self-autonomy and responsibility for their work, they first need to have a healthy level of emotional attachment towards the organization. It's like fertile soil in a garden, in which good things can grow. If people don't feel safe and motivated to bring their authentic selves to work, it probably won't be joyful for them.

What I'm afraid of is that many people's experiences during this pandemic have further damaged the trust and feeling of belonging they had before. Especially the young ones, on whom this had the most impact. This is something that we as leaders will have to work on a lot going forward."

PONTUS KIHLMAN

**Director of CBRE Workplace
Consultancy Finland
Head Of Business Development
at Rapal**

Pontus is a sociable change advocate, a creative and empathetic facilitator that helps workplace strategies, working & learning environments, and new ways of working to be created and implemented. He is a versatile, development-minded workplace enthusiast and promoter of circular and sharing economies, flex work, and workplace solutions that enable smarter ways of working while providing work-life balance. He believes in creating change through people and empowering work arrangements that get the job done.

"I think in order for people to feel like they're a part of something, they need to be given power over their work. In knowledge work, the base level should be treating people like adults. Including them in planning and target setting. Giving them freedom and enough resources to meet the goals. And autonomy isn't only a prerequisite for joy, but also allows people to be more productive. That's what happens when each person can decide when, where, and how they work, when they can synchronize the pace of their work with their internal rhythm. This way, they don't feel like they are just cogs in a wheel, but they are contributors, storytellers of their own lives. Not just carrying out someone else's plans and dreams."

DR. URS KARKOSCHKA

Head of Wellbeing at Novartis

Urs is a senior executive in the field of human resources with over 24 years of experience. He is energized by enabling individuals, teams, and organizations to achieve their full potential in a high-performing team environment. He has an extensive track record in building organizational and people capabilities in various industrial sectors, environments and particularly in emerging markets, such as Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He is on a way to becoming mindfully self-aware.

"Having fun, doing something joyful, is a state of mind where you are typically fully present in the here and now, rather than worrying about the future or complaining about the past. It's a mindful state of the body and mind. You need to be accepted the way you are. You need to be included to feel that you're contributing something and your opinion is heard out. Feeling like you're working towards a common goal is important too. It's joyful to see that as a team, you create something that is bigger than the parts that went into it."

If you are a leader and an associate comes in and says: "This is what I really love, where I'm fully engaged, committed, where I enjoy every single moment," the organization, the leader, or the team should do whatever is in their hands to put them into that role. Because this way, they will be fully engaged, present, and committed. And then, obviously, the outcome is typically better for the organization too. But for that, we need self-awareness, and we are rarely taught it at school or at work.

ALEXANDRA BRENNER

Graphic Facilitator and Illustrator at blaugezeichnet/vink

Alexandra is an illustrator, graphic recorder, and founder of the multimedia agency blaugezeichnet. She likes her coffee black, without sugar, and preferably freshly roasted. She finds it exciting to deal with new technologies and digitalization. The topic of sustainability is also close to her heart. She often asks herself: "What will our future look like – and how will we humans live in it?" Alexandra has previously sharpened her eye in the well-known animation studios nutcracker Frankfurt, VerVieVas Vienna, as well as through numerous lectures and training courses.

"I worked in an agency before I started my own business. The workload there was enormous. The day had a strict schedule, you had definite deadlines, and in between, you somehow lacked the air to breathe. That was also one of the reasons why I thought about starting my own business. I wanted to have my projects, but I wanted to give them the time I think they need. I wanted to take a more playful approach, to try things out."

"Another important point is courage. At university, my colleagues always tried to be as serious as possible in order to be taken seriously. I don't think this is the only way to be taken seriously. I think you can be serious about your ideas and at the same time communicate them in a humorous way. Things that make us smile are not necessarily things that can't be taken seriously. But to do that, you have to have the courage to do funny, playful things."

STEFAN CAMENZIND

Partner and Executive Director at Evolution Design

Stefan is a partner and executive director of Evolution Design, an award-winning Swiss architecture and design studio with particular expertise in workplace design. Evolution Design has created unique offices for Google, Unilever, UPC, Barry Callebaut, and Flipkart, delivering optimal work environments, from research to design and implementation. As an architect and workplace innovator, Stefan accompanies his customers with the vision of creating smart and innovative workspaces of the future.

"What we need from our workplaces in order to feel joy is highly personal. For instance, if you look at the difference between people's homes and the wide variety of interiors. I'm lucky enough to have enough space at home for a separate study to work in peace and quiet. When I take a break from work, I can walk out into the garden, rest on a comfy sofa and have a moment to think. The office can't replicate this, so I believe in order to find joy in the post-pandemic office, one has very different needs from, say a student who lives in a very small room or apartment with no external spaces.

And that's why I'm convinced that you have to seriously raise the bar in the post-pandemic office, because you have to offer amenities to far more diverse requirements than ever before. Obviously, it's impossible to meet everybody's ideal requirements, but hopefully,

you can do that for at least 80% of the users. In the post-pandemic office, you have to provide something over and above what people have at home already, or better, you need to understand how you can create added value to people when they do come into the office.

This is precisely what we're doing with our office. In our case, we reduced desk space and built a workshop for selecting and working with materials, something you can't easily have at home. We also created a spacious communal kitchen with a large dining table for team lunches, thereby supporting people's wish for more social interaction and team-building. Our office is now a kind of recharge station for social interaction that underpins our company culture."

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"It's a fundamental human desire to have more control over your life, have more opportunities and to make your own autonomous decisions. The covid pandemic has clearly revealed how important this is to people. We have seen how many of our clients are trying to reorganize themselves in the new world. And reorganization very often also means restricting the freedoms people have had. It has been proven that people have been able to organize themselves successfully during the pandemic and have even been able to deliver more than before! But employees are worried that their companies might not honour that and might reduce their self-determination now.

We've had people telling us: 'I've been working for 20 years in this company and I've never felt so happy in my life and in my job since I've been able to organize myself and also work from home'. This is powerful stuff. Why would you want to take this empowerment away from anybody? That would simply be crazy!

So, it's really about the organization first and the office second. To use a culinary analogy: The office is like adding spices to a meal. If you haven't cooked the right ingredients in the right quality, you're not going to magically make your meal taste good by simply adding a bit of spice. But with the right, fresh ingredients and knowing how to cook them well, your office environment becomes like spices that enhance and bring amazing depth of flavour to your meal."

"The opposite of joy is fear of work - fear of not being good enough for a task or fear of failing at a task."

MARKUS WILDBERGER-NIEDERLEITHNER

CEO at morning

Markus has 12 years of professional experience in the digital sector/e-commerce and has been in various strategic and content management positions at A1Telekom, Netconomy and at the XXXLutz Group, where he was active as Vice President for Innovation & Expansion, including the development of the brand xxxl.digital. Today he is a co-founder and CEO of the digital start-up morning. He loves to challenge the status quo and get things done straightforwardly.

"In the context of work, joy is when you see other people flourish. I see it mostly in having a vision of how something should be, and that has a positive impact on others. It doesn't always have to be a social impact, it can also be a financial impact. If others can thrive this way, you can give them something to take with them on their way, so that afterward they can say: I've taken something with me here and made my own experiences and can therefore go different ways myself and make decisions that I wouldn't have taken otherwise."

HOW TO DESIGN A WORKPLACE FOR ENJOYABLE WORK

MICHAL MATLON

B y now, it's clear that we need to rethink the role workplaces play in our organizations. For a long time, our offices have been "places of habit" - somewhere people go without explicitly questioning whether they are necessary or what exactly their benefits and functions are. Not that we would lack complaints about bad working environments. It's just that very few people have imagined that such a big change in practices (and ensuing discussion) could come so quickly.

We suggest taking a radically purpose-oriented approach to designing workplaces. As an implication, we would not start with questions such as "Should we plan for more open spaces?" or "How can we push people to become office nomads?". Rather, the process would start with asking "How can spaces enable our future knowledge and innovation processes?". Now, more than ever, is a great opportunity to ask yourself: "What is my office space really about? And how can I make it such an attractive and meaningful place where people will really want to spend their time? So that they themselves and my organization will benefit from their presence and interactions?"

On the previous pages of this publication, you have learned about why we should engage in and promote work that fills people with a deep experience of joy.

We claim that joy, based on the concept of eudaimonia, is such a fundamental thing that it's actually the final goal towards which our work (and lives) should lead. The ultimate purpose of work is to find joy in doing it.

You have learned what this means in practice and what you can do to make joyful work a reality in your organization. Now, it's time to look at space, and how it can become an enabler of joyful work – an Enabling Space.

Yet, it's important to understand that space alone will not make work enjoyable. As one of our interview partners, architect Stefan Camenzind, said, the workplace is what spices are to a meal. If you start with fresh ingredients, it can add a much-needed flavor. But you can't fix rotten meat by adding salt and pepper.

The fresh ingredients, in this case, are a well-designed and purposeful organization, a supportive culture, open-minded people, and an employee community that is built on trust.

That said, let's take a look at how to make the office the spice that enables joyful work for your employees and colleagues.

1. Let people choose how they work. In the new paradigm of post-pandemic work, people can choose if they want to work in the office, at home, or anywhere else. Leaders need to ensure this autonomy, but also help team members negotiate with each other and create their own rules about how, where, and when the team needs to interact.

2. Understand what each employee needs from the office. Someone with a well-equipped and comfortable home office won't be motivated to come to work simply to do the same thing they could do at home. Especially if working in the office feels worse than at home. On the other hand, someone with an uncomfortable or distracting environment at home will want to use the office not only for meeting people and collaborating but also for doing undisturbed, focused work.

3. Allow people to personalize and customize their space. A good office doesn't have to come as an already finished, highly designed product, which can't be modified or owned by people who work there. Good workplace design offers the elements that people can't pro-

vide themselves but gives lots of opportunities for personalizing and adapting the space to the team's culture.

We need to do away with rules forbidding employees to put up materials on walls, leave personal items in the team space, or even modify the space to fit their needs. People's engagement and satisfaction will rise in a highly personalized environment, where they are allowed to express their individual and team identities.

4. Enable people to focus and be truly effective. You can learn a lot about designing sustainably productive workplaces in general from various reports, documentation of certificates such as WELL, and guidelines on biophilic design. Given you apply these general principles, it's as important to fulfill the individual needs of your employees related to work effectiveness.

You probably know "how things have to be" so that you can work well. And you are probably aware that people differ a lot on traits such as the level of visual, acoustic, and social stimulation they work best under. They also have different needs for ergonomy and equipment, which, if not met, will influence the quality of their work.

People also have different ways of organizing their thoughts - some people need to offload their minds visually, for example onto a whiteboard. Some work best when they can talk to themselves or others. Leaders need to understand their employees well and provide for these in-

dividual needs in the workplace if they are to see what the real potential of their people is.

5. Design spaces for meaningful social interaction that foster a feeling of belonging. Your employees will enjoy their work and develop a strong relationship with their organization if they feel they belong to a true community. This also means that they have to feel comfortable with bringing their authentic self to the workplace. This is a task for leaders in the first place – this kind of feeling comes from a welcoming organizational culture. However, a well-designed space plays an important role as an enabler, too.

People need to feel in control of how much they expose themselves to others. The fashion for fully transparent offices divided only by glass walls has led to a constant sense of being observed and vulnerable. Yet, we enjoy interactions with others most when they are not forced upon us, when we can truly decide about when to engage and with whom. This is why it's important to design places where people can be alone, or only with their closest team if needed. A practical example for how to realize this is the concept of a "team neighborhood": a visitor will go through intermediate "territories" such as breakout and collaboration spaces until they reach ", the core team space.

At the same time, it's important to create places that support intense social interaction – where anyone from the company can visit, get to know new people, or engage with others during joint activities.

These spaces can resemble social spaces we find outside of work – busy cafés, cozy clubs, activity, or event venues. Of course, organizing the right events in these places is as important as the design of the space.

6. Create places for playfulness and experimentation. An important quality of enjoyable work is the ability to regularly try out new things and approaches to problems, and even fail, without facing negative consequences. You can design the workplace to enable these kinds of activities. For example by creating project or prototyping spaces that teams can occupy for a few weeks or months at a time while working together.

These spaces need to allow the teams to truly "own" them for as long as they need. They should be able to keep their belongings and project materials there, even if they leave the space temporarily. These spaces should also create a safe environment by providing the team with full visual and acoustic privacy – no one should be able to see what's happening inside until they are ready to demonstrate it to others. Then, the space should enable showcasing the work to the colleagues.

Another type of experimentation space could be workshops and maker spaces. For these, the same principles apply, with the possible addition of expert support and organized programming.

7. Design spaces for recreation and replenishment. As you have learned on the previous pages, creating opportunities and allowing people to "not-work" at work is an important aspect of an enjoyable work environment leading to radical innovation. The workplace can enable "not-work work", through specific types of spaces and certain qualities of design (for example biophilic design).

Leaders need to create such restorative spaces for their employees, whether it's relaxation and meditation rooms, quiet gardens and parks, places for calm exercise, such as yoga, or even simple amenities like private showers. However, the employees have to truly feel that they are free to use these spaces and that they will not face any social repercussions for doing so. It's ultimately up to the leaders to develop such a culture.

LET US HELP YOU CREATE AN ENJOYABLE COMPANY

If you'd like us to help you put the Enjoyable Company principles outlined in this publication into practice, please go to **thelivingcore.com/call** and book a free introductory call with us.

We are a multidisciplinary team with over **20 years of experience** enabling meaningful change in organizations. Our clients value the **authentic, purpose-driven, and co-creative** approach we bring to their transformation projects.

With a background in cognitive science, we will help you to deeply understand your organization's culture and values. Then, we will partner with you in designing a truly enjoyable workplace for your employees.

HAPPINESS MACHINE ORGANIZATION

ENJOYABLE ORGANIZATION

Smart meeting room booking system.

Employees can designate a no-meetings, no-calls day.

Equipment is selected based on current trends and top-level decisions.

People get equipment based on their needs and preferences.

The office is located on the highest floors of an office tower.

The office has window views of restorative nature and architecture.

The workplace is designed by a famous architect. Customization by employees is forbidden.

The workplace is designed in a co-creative process between architects and employees. Workers are allowed to personalize and decorate their desks and spaces.

Motivational speakers and special guests are invited to company events.

Leaders regularly take time to discuss the future direction of their company with their employees.

The company motivates people to take on its "cool" identity – e.g. by giving away company logo shirts.

The company makes people feel they can be themselves and behave authentically at work without being judged.

Tasks are distributed through gamification, job rotation is mandatory.

Employees can suggest their own goals and job responsibilities and negotiate them with their colleagues.

Free dinner for late workers.

Workers can align with their colleagues and decide on where, when, and how they work.

OPINION

————

THOMAS FUNDNEIDER

WHY THE POST-COVID OFFICE IS NOT ABOUT THE OFFICE

In a recent interview, I have been asked about how to get employees back to the office. How should we motivate them, what should we add to the work-place? I think this question is wrong at its core. Why would we need to motivate employees to get into the of-fice at all? What is more, orga-nizations now realized this is not their most troubling issue. They found out employees not only don't want to give up their remote working freedom, but many don't want to work for their current employer anymore.

I see this as a positive side of the pandemic. Thanks to it, employees were forced into a kind of an "off-site" re-treat, where they could contemplate on what is really important for them in life. Hopefully, organizations will now also take the example and organize such retreats

to think together about the Why and What, not only the usual How.

So why is it then, that a substantial number of employees don't want to get back to work?[1] They had the opportuni-ty to rethink what they want to do with their lives. They don't feel connected to the purpose of their company (if there is any at all) and to its lived values. They also don't want to deal with toxic colleagues or incapable leaders – an issue that organi-zations have often still not learned to deal with (or they don't want to).

> "The secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and greatest enjoyment is to live dangerously."
>
> –Friedrich Nietzsche

Why was it specifically the pandemic and the restrictions that came with it, that kickstarted this change? Because the freedoms that came with remote work-ing address a basic human need. People have recognized a sense of autonomy

————

1   Smet, A., Dowling, B., Mugayar-Baldocchi, M., & Schaninger, B. (2021, December 17). 'Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction'? The choice is yours. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved January 19, 2022, from https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/peo-ple-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/great-attrition-or-great-attraction-the-choice-is-yours

OPINION

THOMAS FUNDNEIDER

which they haven't experienced for quite a long time. They have also proven to be highly productive during the pandemic and many have delivered extraordinary results this way.

Some managers, many of whom said that this way of working won't be possible, are now advocating for a return to the old normal. But employees are not willing to give up their newly experienced freedom. So what should organizations do? I would suggest the following:

- **Enabling connections.** People thrive in getting in resonance with other people, topics, and their organization's value and purpose. They feel it when they develop mutual relationships and co-create something together with others. Usually, we focus on connections between people, however, this is not enough. Organizational spaces are great places for bringing people together, who work on inspiring topics, connect the dots in order to create our future.

- **Doing real innovation work.** No innovation theater, not incrementally producing more of the same, but creating new services, business models, products which have a desirable purpose at their core. This also requires leaders who

support their teams when they deal with unknowns and ambiguity. It also means being honest about the value of innovations in case they might jeopardize the current business model(s).

- **Providing space and means so that employees can develop themselves.** Since people are usually not engaged with classic training, we should allow them to self-actualize and provide them with assistance to do so. As they feel themselves personally growing, they are also developing their relationship with their organization which in the end benefits from it.

Concluding, nicely designed offices won't suffice anymore. I am convinced that organizations need to take real accountability for the development and wellbeing of their employees. In German, we say "Verantwortung", and as the term implies, accountability is about giving answers. However, to give good answers, we also need to pose the right questions. And this, in turn, means that leaders need to learn how to make change happen through people, not to them.

THE JOYFUL MANAGER WORKSHEET

On the following pages, you will find a set of exercises, aimed at helping you understand and put into practice the 6 qualities we found to be important for creating an enjoyable workplace. We invite you to set aside some time from your day to answer the following questions. Who knows, you might just kickstart a transformation journey...

SELF–DETERMINATION

———

We understand self-determination at work as an ability of a person to consciously shape and decide about their way of working, goals, and responsibilities. Self-determination is closely related to the concept of autonomy and taking ownership.
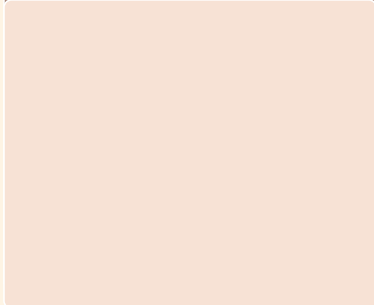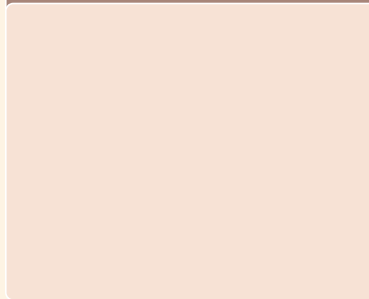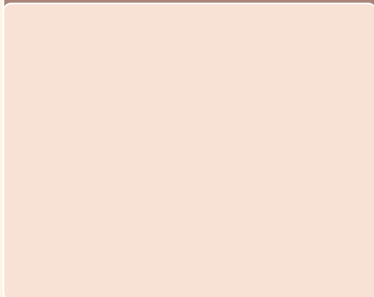
STEP 1
ABOUT YOURSELF

Please complete the statements below.

—

To me, self-determination means...

- _____
- _____
- _____

The last time I found myself being self-determined was...

SITUATION

BECAUSE

I FELT

What prevents me from taking owner-ship of my time and way of working?

What could I do about it?

$\longrightarrow$

$\longrightarrow$

$\longrightarrow$

STEP 2
ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Think about 3 specific people in your team. For each of them, try to answer the questions.

NAME OF PERSON A:

How would you see that this person exhibits self-determination?

In which respect do you want this person to be more self-determined?

What is this person currently (not) doing that makes you think of them in the context of self-determination?

NAME OF PERSON B:

How would you see that this person exhibits self-determination?

_____

_____

In which respect do you want this person to be more self-determined?

_____

_____

What is this person currently (not) doing that makes you think of them in the context of self-determination?

_____

_____

NAME OF PERSON C:

How would you see that this person exhibits self-determination?

_____

_____

In which respect do you want this person to be more self-determined?

_____

_____
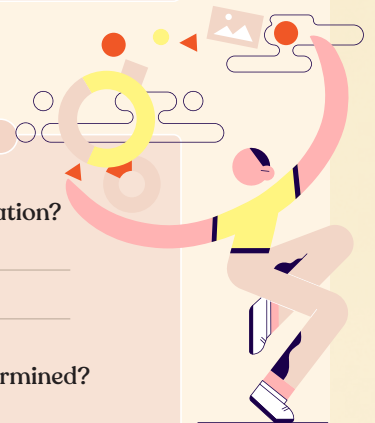
What is this person currently (not) doing that makes you think of them in the context of self-determination?

_____

_____

STEP 3
ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Reflect on the following questions:

What have you learned from steps 1 and 2 that you want to bring to your superior(s) attention in order to support your team's self-determination?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

How could your organization increase employees' autonomy and provide them with more opportunities to decide how, when, where, and with whom they work?

SHORT TERM   MID TERM   LONG TERM
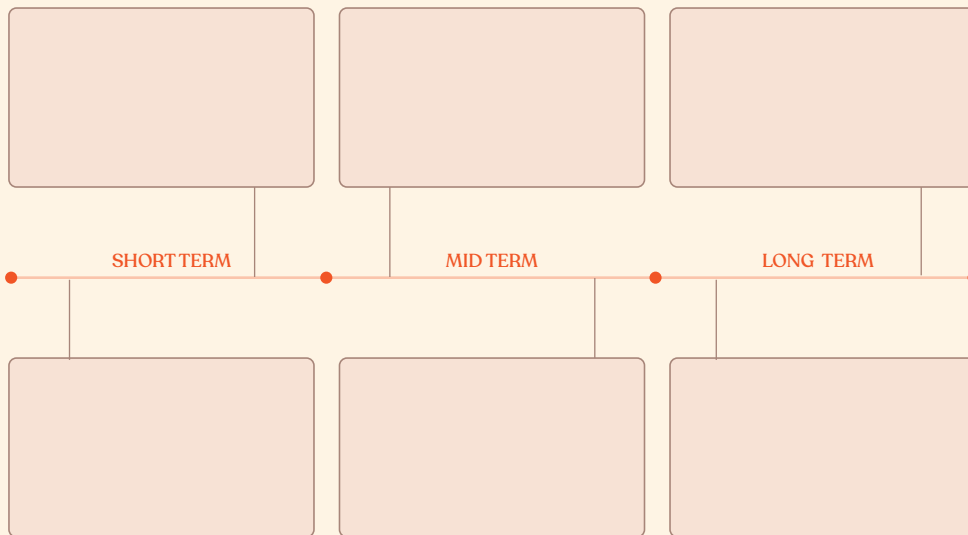
GOAL ORIENTATION

———

Goal orientation is a disposition, which enables a person to see whether their efforts are successful. When goals are clear, aligned with our aspirations, and achievable, we can truly start developing mastery in the work we do, because we are clear on where we are doing well and where we can learn and improve.

STEP 1

ABOUT YOURSELF

Take some time to think about the following quotes.
Choose the ones you like most and think about what you find
motivating and inspiring.

———

1 "A goal is not always meant to be reached; it often serves simply as something to aim at."

-Bruce Lee

2 "A goal without a timeline is just a dream."

-Robert Herjavec

3 "Set goals and focus on completing one goal at a time."

K. Collins

4 "We think, mistakenly, that success is the result of the amount of time we put in at work, instead of the quality of time we put in."

-Arianna Huffington

5 "While working on completing your goal, you may encounter possible setbacks. Instead of beating yourself up, look at them as opportunities to learn and grow."

-Kyle Nussen

6 "Goals can change from time to time but then remember to focus on your priorities."

-Roger Collmar

7 "The going is the goal."

-Horace Kallen

8 "Stop setting goals. Goals are pure fantasy unless you have a specific plan to achieve them."

-Stephen Covey

Chances are that your choices reflect your preferred ways of setting goals and working to achieve them. Mind you, your colleagues could prefer different ones.

STEP 2
ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Choose 3 people in your team. For each of them, try to find a way to set and follow up on goals, which is tailored to their strengths and work preferences. You can also use the quotes from above to kick-start the thinking process. Follow the guiding questions.

NAME OF PERSON A:

How does this person want to be part of goal setting?

- ( ) • ( ) • ( )

What does this person need in order to "accept" a goal and "own" it?

_____

_____

How is this person able to deal with many or conflicting goals?

_____

_____

What does this person need to be able to achieve goals (personal support, time, team, "positive pressure", etc.)?

- ( ) • ( ) • ( )

How does this person deal with obstacles, setbacks and failure?

_____

_____

How does this person want to be recognized when a goal is achieved?

- ( ) • ( ) • ( )
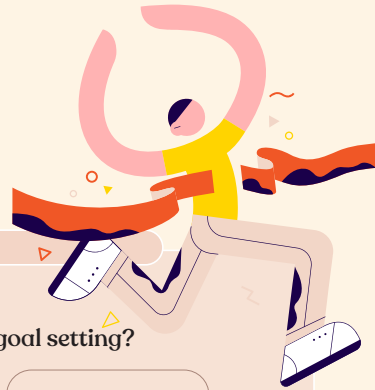
NAME OF PERSON B:

How does this person want to be part of goal setting?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

What does this person need in order to "accept" a goal and "own" it?

_____

_____

How is this person able to deal with many or conflicting goals?

_____

_____

What does this person need to be able to achieve goals (personal support, time, team, "positive pressure", etc.)?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

How does this person deal with obstacles, setbacks and failure?

_____

_____

How does this person want to be recognized when a goal is achieved?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

How does this person want to be part of goal setting?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

What does this person need in order to "accept" a goal and "own" it?

_____

_____

How is this person able to deal with many or conflicting goals?

_____

_____

What does this person need to be able to achieve goals (personal support, time, team, "positive pressure", etc.)?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

How does this person deal with obstacles, setbacks and failure?

_____

_____

How does this person want to be recognized when a goal is achieved?

- ( ) ( ) ( )

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Reflect on the following questions:

How would you explain the long-term goals of your organization to an outsider?

GOAL:

GOAL:

GOAL:

Over the course of a week, observe behaviors and daily practices of your colleagues that support or contradict the organization's long-term goals.

	SUPPORTS	CONTRADICTS
•	☐	☐
•	☐	☐
•	☐	☐

PRESENCE

———

Being present at work means that people are able to focus on what's important, e.g. that they can dive into a single, deeply-engaging task or situation without inter-ruption. Being present allows us to use our full potential and to ensure that our capacities are not exhausted.

STEP 1
ABOUT YOURSELF

Imagine these work scenarios:

———

SCENARIO 1

Problem-solving session with your team.

SCENARIO 2

Operational work (phone calls, emails, administrative tasks).

SCENARIO 3

Individual strategic thinking on a new topic or project.
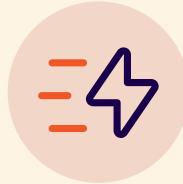
SCENARIO 4

Conflict resolution in an uncomfortable conversation with a client.

For each of the scenarios, answer the following question: "What do I need to be fully present?"
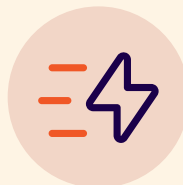
For each of the scenarios, note down what would create stress for you or when you would feel uncomfortable or unproductive - and how you could counter it.

WHAT CREATES STRESS   HOW TO COUNTER IT

STEP 2
ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Choose one person within your team and ask them to complete the same exercise you did in step 1.

Then talk about your notes.

Take a walk through your office or company premises (indoors and outdoors) and draw a map of places where you can be fully present. Note down the qualities of the places and what you are usually doing there.

———

MAP

Now, do the same thing with a focus on places where it is impossible to be fully present.

Ask your team to do the same thing.

———

MAP

Now talk with your team about what you found out. You can use these guiding questions to kick-start the conversation.

———

What are places that allow you all to feel fully present (being able to focus and work effectively)? Can you use them more often? For which purpose?

PLACE	PURPOSE	WHEN

Which places don't work for your team? Do you need to use them? If so, how could you adapt these places to fit your needs?

PLACE	IDEAS FOR ADAPTATION OR RE-PURPOSING

Bring your insights to the attention of your superior(s) and/or people in charge of creating a positive workplace environment.

AUTHENTICITY

—

We define authenticity as the degree to which a person's
actions are congruent with their values and desires,
despite external pressures to conform.

ABOUT YOURSELF

First, note down your own values and desires. Then, note down your organization's values and desires.

MY VALUES	DO THEY MATCH?	ORGANIZATION'S VALUES
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	

MY DESIRES	DO THEY MATCH?	ORGANIZATION'S DESIRES
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	
	YES NO	

Where are they congruent? Where are they contradictory or "work against each other"?

Describe a specific situation when you experienced resonance between your own and your organization's values.

THE SITUATION

HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU?

Describe a specific situation when you experienced a conflict between your own and your organization's values.

THE SITUATION

HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

DID YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

STEP 2

ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Ask your team members to fill out the list of
personal values and desires.

Then show them the list you drafted in Step 1
(p. 67) and ask them if they see anything differ-
ently or if something is missing.

―――

Look at both lists and discuss with your team what that
means in terms of authenticity.

STEP 3

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Together with your team, take a look at the list of values and de-
sires you jotted down for your organization. Answer the following
questions together.

―――

1   Where is the organization acting in line
with its values and desires?

2   When is the organization behaving in a
non-authentic way? Please describe the
situations.

Now, create a persona for the organization and
make it as human-like as possible.

ORGANIZATION'S PERSONA

What are the persona's strengths and weaknesses?

- ( ) - ( )   - ( ) - ( )
- ( ) - ( )   - ( ) - ( )

**What can the persona do really well, where does it need to
develop and transform itself?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

In which situations does the persona show its "inner beauty"?

- ( )   - ( )   - ( )

When is the persona not authentic or "playing a game"?

- ( )   - ( )   - ( )

**Then, still thinking about the organization as a human-like persona,
discuss what you could do to help it show its more authentic self.**

_____

_____

_____

PLAYFULNESS

——

Playfulness allows people to engage freely with their own and their colleagues' ideas and emotions. It also creates an opportunity to discover and experiment, without being pressured by a need to perform.

STEP 1

ABOUT YOURSELF

Go for a walk and take photos of situations or places that radiate playfulness.

———

Describe why you chose to take the picture and what are the qualities of playfulness in the given picture.

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

STEP 2

ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Invite your team members to have a dialogue about playfulness. You can use the following questions to guide the conversation:

———

When you were a child, what would you play with?
What are the qualities that you associate with a playful person?
What is not playful for you?
When was the last time you experienced playfulness (at work)?

Once you have reached a joint understanding of what everybody
associates with playfulness, have an honest conversation about
your team and work environment.

Where and when are you (not) playful?
How does playfulness contribute to a better quality of work?
Come up with 5 things you want to do to include playfulness in your work and
set up a plan to try them out.

1

2

3

4

5

STEP 3
ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Reflect on the following questions about playfulness:

———

Is playfulness valued in your organization? If yes, give examples. If not, why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Make a list of 3-5 things that you can do to infuse your organization with more playfulness. Describe how you are going to do them and try out at least 2!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

PURPOSE

———

Purpose is a driving force giving a future-oriented direction to people's actions. A clearly defined and lived purpose is not only a critical instrument for offering orientation and coherence but also equips you with a clear outlook on your future.
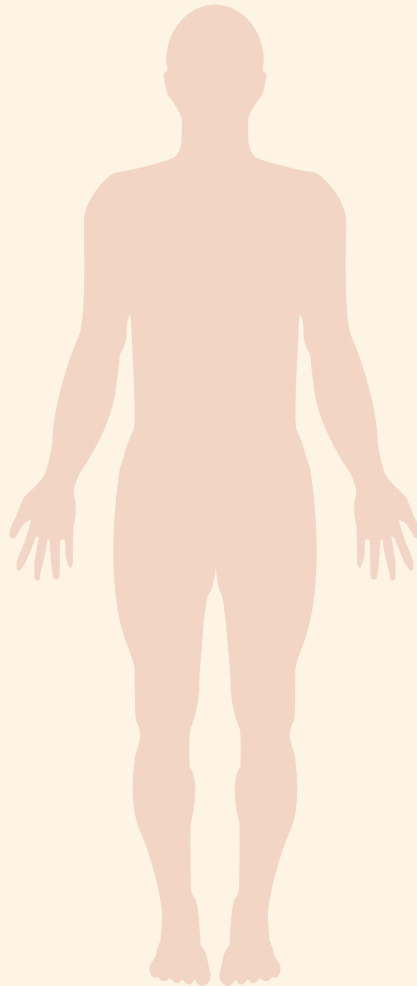
STEP 1

ABOUT YOURSELF

Choose a private and quiet space and direct your attention inwards.

———

Where does purpose manifest in your body? Where do you feel it? Can you describe its qualities or how it interacts with your body?

Draw a small sketch of your experience.

ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Invite your team to have a "bullshit bingo session" focused
on the term "purpose":

———

What are the buzzwords that they associate with it?

BULLSHIT BINGO CARD		

Then ask them to take some time individually, reflect on the
term purpose and share their thoughts.

STEP 3
ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

If your organization has a mission or vision statement, please write it down.

———

Together with your team, reflect on them.

———

What do the statements tell you on a deeper level?
Do they make sense to you?

Now, take a step into the future and look at your organization. What is the future asking from your organization? Why does society need your organization?

Finally, discuss how this future purpose fits with your current mission and vision statement and reflect on the implications for your team.

DID YOU FIND THE WORKSHEET USEFUL?

———

Are you inspired to work with the above questions and would like an experienced sparring partner at your side? Simply go to **thelivingcore.com/call** and book a free introductory call with us.

We are a multidisciplinary team with over **20 years of experience** enabling meaningful change in organizations. Our clients value the **authentic, purpose-driven, and co-creative** approach we bring to their transformation projects.

THE ENJOYABLE COMPANY

ABOUT theLivingCore

Our work as knowledge and innovation architects is all about the vitality of organizations and the people who work there. For both of them, vitality means being authentic in the midst of life and contributing to our world in a meaningful way. Orientation, the creation of new meaning, and purpose are key in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity - the VUCA world. Living systems handle these challenges by finding a good balance between stability and renewal.

At theLivingCore, we follow this principle in our work with companies. It helps us turn the challenges of a digitized VUCA world into something positive by transforming and accompanying organizations on their path from their living core toward the future. Our approach of "learning from the future" enables us to develop living and thriving organizations and spaces.

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