

# WHOLEHEARTEDNESS AT WORK: FOUR ADDITIONAL PRACTICES

Continuing from last month's article, we'll take a deeper look at wholehearted practices. Remember this:

Wholeheartedness at work is a daily practice; it's not something you get from reading a book, listening to a podcast or even attending a workshop (and I teach them!). It's a daily showing up and a chance for reflection, robust discussion and connection to that which is important. The pressure is always for more, faster, better – not necessarily negative pursuits in themselves, but at what cost to individuals, teams or communities? What leaders really need is a right relationship to their livelihood: to have harmony and joy, to have a sense of satisfaction and celebration, to experience real relationships and create a powerful impact. 90,000 hours is a lot of time to invest in one's livelihood, and it deserves thoughtful, purposeful consideration and meaningful action. As always, we begin with you.

Here are four additional practices to improve the quality of your 90,000 hours at work, and your relationship to your work and career:

## Practice 5: Practice Radical Self-Care

Everyone talks about “self-care” in the mythical context of work-life balance. A growing flood of books aim to help busy professionals establish a reasonable relationship with their time, especially their time at work. (See Aiofe McElwan's *Slow At Work* and Laura Vanderkam's TED talk on getting more free time.)

Radical self-care isn't just about massages and vacations – though those are great! First, you must define what's “radical” personally for you. Would it be taking daily time for lunch away from your screens? Would it be saying yes to something you really wanted to learn but didn't think you had time for? Would it be “radical” to work from home one day a week, even though you don't think anyone will support it? You know it's a radical practice if it feels a bit risky and you notice you're getting a little excited by the possibility!

## Practice 6: Engaging in Courageous Conversations

I believe in, and have seen lots of evidence for the conversational nature of things. We are in conversation with ourselves, our loved ones, our colleagues and co-workers, our communities, our companies and our nations every day. We are continually engaging with the give-and-take and push-and-pull of our daily realities.

We stand courageously in these conversations because not to do so will prevent us from having a wholehearted life and a rich experience of being human. Some conversations require our full courage from the start: they ask us to connect to what matters to us, and try to be fully present to it. This is very different than showing up with a list of

demands or sending a flaming e-mail. Courageous conversations invite us to be the best versions of ourselves: vulnerable, strong, convinced, open, resilient and willing. The alternative, showing up as only part of ourselves, without our unique voices, without a desire for community and connection, is the exact opposite of wholeheartedness.

## Practice 7: Cultivating Relationships & Support

Our cultural mythology is full of lone-hero role models: Lone Ranger, lone wolf, lone survivor. And, yes, it's good to know where and when we're truly alone and the decisions are wholly ours. But in our working relationships and workplaces, we are not alone and we'll never be alone. Yet we may feel terribly lonely and inadequate to admit that we need or want to ask for help.

The higher you go in an organization, the worse it gets, which is why people have executive coaches. To experience more wholeheartedness at work, we need to develop strong, high-trust relationships and a willingness to ask for support. We are not alone, and it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, mentoring, coaching or support. This is one of the most profound and terrible myths of leadership: that you are on your own.

## Practice 9: Taking Time

We've looked at *Creating Spaciousness* and *Practicing Radical Self-Care*, but *Wholeheartedness Practice* is ever so slightly different. What will you do outside of your 90,000 hours at work? Think of it this way: time off, time with, and time for. I don't know if I believe in “bucket lists.” But I do believe in dreaming and desire and living a full life. Sometimes I take time to have breakfast in my garden, to light a candle on a winter morning before going about my chores and readying for the day. Sometimes I close my computer and shut the door to my office and take time to prepare a lovely meal or call a friend. I might respond to a text from a client who's in need and make time for a quick phone call that will improve our relationship. Other times I may respond to the same text by setting a firm boundary: can we take time to talk tomorrow?

Wholeheartedness at work is a deeply personal practice and philosophy. Most of all, it's about connecting with yourself, your work and your life. It's a way of being, but it's also a way of showing up, and the behaviors that will support your best life yet.

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