



Connected
Commons



Leadership

Stories of Thriving Through Intentionally Built Networks In And Out Of Work



Overcoming The Slow Burn And Identity Crisis To Thrive



Georgette

Former
Manager of Managers,
Now Individual Contributor

18 years at Fortune 50 tech company, fiercely driven, used to executing fast

Took pride in work, liked being successful, outperforming others, being the go-to

"I always felt I had to do more, to go further. I had to be the best. I had to save the day."

"The workload was beyond the realm of doable ... I became the life raft and then would almost drown."

Burned out, exhausted, gaining weight and feeling her health was at stake, she quit.

A Surprising Thing Happened ...



Instead of feeling relief, she felt lost. **“I didn’t know who I was anymore.”**

While floundering, she took a yoga class for the first time, committing to three sessions:

- The first, she thought was laughable and not her: music, chanting and talk of the bravery of daffodils
- The second, she reminded herself she had nothing better to do, so be present and participate
- The third was cathartic. She saw it was good to laugh together when they couldn’t do something well, to see beauty in failure. At the end, a simple touch on her head by her instructor had her holding back tears

“Yoga—and the embarrassment of not being good at it, but being OK with that—changed my life.”

Yoga Changed Her Life ... But Not For Reasons You Might Think



Learned it was OK to fail, to be imperfect, to ask for help, to say no

Identity and ego is not built around achievement and being a hero

Sets clear boundaries: gives it her all M-F, won't work nights and weekends

Is purposeful about her contribution, collaborations and relationships

“I am more balanced. I’m pretty good at saying, *I can’t* or *I won’t*. I’m OK with my own imperfections and limits.”

Collaborating Around Purpose, Managing Overload And Flexing Work



Amara

First-Level Leader

“Lived and breathed” a
global product launch

- Clear goal, could not fail
- Compelling purpose: innovative therapy, business win
- Team commitment, “don’t want to let my team members down,” energized by progress and accomplishment
- Diligent about meetings and email rules
- Works from home 2-3 days a week: “People said, How did you get that? I say, I asked. Have you ever asked?”
- Structures day to manage global work: a mid-afternoon break to work out or manage personal life, then back online

Collaborating Around Purpose, Managing Overload And Flexing Work



- ✓ Be clear on what generates purpose for yourself and your team
- ✓ Push for efficiency on email and meeting habits to avoid collaborative overload
- ✓ Know your personal rhythms and structure time for interaction, focused work and chance to recharge

“My performance isn’t as good if I’m in the office all week long ... You need to have balance and ways to recharge your batteries.”

Engaging Employees, Holding To Purpose And Recharging



Aden

Manager of Managers
Enjoys being a
turnaround specialist

- Focuses on shared goals and co-creating direction with management team
- Invests in areas employees care about, can engage on, like safety and quality; Aligns words and actions to build trust
- Offers on-the-spot and quarterly recognition and rewards
- Reminds himself of the why: “It’s about setting up health care providers for success”
- Builds relationships of trust—and people you can laugh with
- Decompresses with activities that require full focus to get his mind off work

Engaging Employees, Holding To Purpose And Recharging



- ✓ Build engagement with the full workforce; recognize the desired behaviors and values; invest in trust
- ✓ Focus on purpose and *why* rather than the negatives or demands of others
- ✓ Go all-in on non-work activities. Being fully drawn in creates a mental separation from work.

“I love that this industry is hard ... I love when the light bulb goes on with the team ... I get joy out of seeing my shop floor teams get empowered and become advocates for what we want to do.”

Giving Respect, Setting Boundaries, Getting Out Of The Work Bubble



Brendan

Senior Leader

Reduces stress in a
global role

- Sets context for others to thrive: listens, shows respect, co-creates.
- Is clear about non-negotiables—and “agnostic about how”
- Gives appreciation, spends an hour every Friday to write notes and send emails of thanks and recognition
- Prioritizes personal health
- Takes weekend golf trips with friends to disconnect from the job. “It’s easy to fall into a world where you only have friends at work, you only talk about work, you only think about work.”

Giving Respect, Setting Boundaries, Getting Out Of The Work Bubble



- ✓ Establish a leadership style that helps people learn, grow and have a sense of autonomy
- ✓ Be clear about priorities for yourself and others
- ✓ Gain perspective through relationships and activities outside of work
- ✓ Seek satisfaction through interactions with others, not outcomes and things going well

“The reason I am here is I like the people ... If I can help someone develop or be part of something with others—that’s what gets me out of bed in the morning.”

7 Positive Signs



1

Others care about the same aspects of the work

2

You are energized by how you work with others

3

Structures and rules to manage your time

4

You are not defined by your job.

5

You make health a priority

6

You are optimistic about opportunities

7

You see the positive aspects of work