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"Our life is what our thoughts make it." Marcus Aurelius

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TOPIC THIS ISSUE:
BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTION ADAPTED FROM BACK TO HUMAN

BY: DAN SCHAWBEL

TECHNOLOGY IS ISOLATING US AT WORK
BY: DAN SCHAWBEL

Modern technologies have impacted our workplaces in ways that would have been impossible just a decade ago. Instant messaging, digital platforms, and videoconferencing have completely changed how, when, and where we work.

A Gallup survey found that over a third of the entire US workforce has worked remotely. Robotics and artificial intelligence have supercharged our productivity at the cost of replacing tasks and even eliminating full-time jobs from our economy.

Our devices offer many incredible benefits, including real-time interactions, efficiencies in work flow, creation of new ideas, and access to resources. At the same time, those devices have disrupted our relationships and made our workplaces more dysfunctional. Instead of strong bonds, we have weak ties. Instead of productive meetings, we have distractions.

Technology has created an illusion that today's workers are highly connected to one another, when in reality most feel isolated from their colleagues. What they crave most—and what research increasingly shows to be the hallmark of the highest performing workplace cultures—is a sense of authentic

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connection with others.

DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS BUILD COMMITMENT AT WORK

BY: DAN SCHAWBEL

To be fulfilled at work, committed to our teams, and happy, we need to focus on building deeper relationships with the people around us. A few researchers have studied the correlation between the loneliness that isolated employees feel and their commitment to their teams. The consensus is that having work friends and team camaraderie can make a huge difference when it comes to job performance, loyalty to the employer, and employees' overall well being.

It's possible to address the hidden emotional need that makes us more human and less machine, not by discounting technology altogether but by using it to propel your career.

When you master self-connection, promote team connection, and build organizational connection, you can be the leader your organization desperately needs while providing greater fulfillment for you and those you connect with.

Regardless of our age, gender, or ethnic background, we all share the basic human needs to connect deeply with others, to feel loved, and to matter. By meeting these needs, we will be happier and more fulfilled and thus more productive and successful in our teams. Being a leader is about creating fulfillment for yourself and your team, and when you do, the true magic at work occurs.

The Five Characteristics of Personal Fulfillment

There are several key factors you need to focus on to ensure that you're living a happy, well-balanced, and meaningful life:

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Connection: A strong connection to your teammates makes work more meaningful and enjoyable. The lack of it makes work feel like a chore and creates the silos that eliminate creativity and innovation.

Values: If one of your values is authenticity, create and support a transparent and honest culture in your team. Your values are reflected in your actions, so the more you demonstrate them, the more you internalize them.

Purpose: Think hard about your personal story up until right now and about the thread that connects the decisions you've made.

Openness: Many people fear change because it is unpredictable. But as a leader you need to be open to it. Instead of keeping company secrets, con de in your team so that you can build trust. Being open is also about expressing your true feelings instead of holding back.

Accomplishment. This is not only something we desire but also the emotional feeling we have when something is finished. If you want to be more accomplished, set more goals and make sure they're attainable.

Begin by focusing on your own fulfillment. When you feel fulfilled, you naturally have a positive attitude and a clearer direction for what you're working on.

• *What do you enjoy doing the most?*

• *What do your past accomplishments tell you about your strengths?*

• *What are your core values (i.e., adventure, challenge, contribution, respect)?*

• *What brings out your most positive feelings and emotions?*

• *Where do you envision yourself in the future, and why?*

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OPTIMIZE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY
BY: DAN SCHAWBEL

Today, text messages and emails are competing for our time with human connections, and the technology is winning big-time. Several studies show that the average once worker receives more than one hundred emails per day.

Relying too much on technology inhibits our ability to connect and get things done. That said, used appropriately, technology can be our greatest ally. There are several key ways to use technology to bring us together so we can get our work done in the quickest, most efficient way possible.

For example, use a conference room-booking system to lock in a time and place for your team to talk about an important project or facilitate a one-on-one catch-up meeting. Or you can use search engines to quickly answer basic questions. That will save you and your team from having long, unnecessary discussions about them. Use videoconferencing to connect remote employees so they get to see one another even though they aren't physically with the rest of the team.

Three Actions to Optimize Productivity

Technology undermines our productivity in significant— and insidious—ways. Following are three ideas on how to curb that problem.

Procrastinate less. Whenever you're working on a project, it's always helpful to break it down into smaller tasks. When you do that, the overall project becomes less daunting and more manageable, which makes it harder to procrastinate.

Resist perfectionism. Perfectionism is a weakness disguised as a strength. We think that being perfect will enable

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us to be more productive and successful at work, yet striving for it depletes our time, causes anxiety, and makes us unhappy. Perfectionism doesn't work in the fast-paced, always-on world that we live in. If you move slowly at work, another worker who's willing to work smarter and faster will replace you.

Stop multitasking. Dozens of neuroscience research studies prove that our brains don't do tasks simultaneously. Instead, we jump from task to task rapidly. When we shift from the conference call to the status update to the email, there's a stop-and-start process in our brains that causes a momentary lag between steps when nothing happens at all.

The best way to keep from wasting a bunch of time trying to multitask is to become an expert at prioritizing your workload so you're always focused on the right project at the right time instead of on multiple projects all at once. Start by not saying yes to everything people ask of you, because there is truly no way to manage everything at the same time. Instead, focus on what's most important, and delegate the rest to your teammates.

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HIRE FOR PERSONALITY
BY: DAN SCHAWBEL

Because the pace of business is constantly speeding up and companies are always looking for ways to save money, many have looked to technology to lower the cost of recruiting talent and increase the number of people they can reach.

While these companies tout how much money they're saving by doing their interviewing by phone or video, they don't seem to realize that neither of those approaches can ever replace in-person interviews, in which you actually meet people, see their body language, and observe how they handle themselves. Those approaches are missing the critical emotional connections and personality traits that will help you hire the best possible candidate, who will stay with you longer.

Because relationships are the cornerstone to a healthy workplace, shouldn't we put more emphasis on personality when recruiting new employees? It's challenging to work with someone we don't like, but it's exciting to work with someone who has a great personality that meshes well with our own. Hard skills are important, but they can be learned on the job. It's the soft, intangible skills that are so valuable to creating a team that thrives. They're also the ones that technology has a difficult time assessing.

Five Personality Traits to Look for in a New Hire

When you're hiring for your team, there are five personality traits that you should look for. You'll be able to screen for each by paying close attention to the answers you get to a number of key, strategic questions.

Confidence. If you're not con dent, you're less likely to share new ideas, stand up for what you believe in, and per- form at your best. When you're con dent, you know what you're doing and how to convey your knowledge to others.

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Ask candidates, "What was an obstacle you overcame in a previous job?" The answer to this question lets you know about the candidate's ability to push through failure and the challenges that naturally happen in any work situation.

Attitude. You want to hire employees who have a positive attitude because they tend to boost the morale of every- one around them and encourage and motivate their team members to perform better. Ask candidates, "When have you admitted to your teammate(s) that you made a mistake, and how did you manage it?" Candidates with a positive attitude will hold themselves accountable and tend not to make excuses or point anger at others.

Professionalism. The most obvious signs of professionalism are punctuality at the interview (or being early) and the candidate's basic manners. Ask candidates, "Give me an example of a situation in which you had a conflict with a team member, and tell how you handled yourself." The answer to this question will give you a sense of how candidates handle their emotions during a tough situation.

Likability. In the workplace, likable people somehow manage to bring out the best version of you. Also, they have an incredible competitive advantage because they tend to get promoted more quickly (managers tend to promote people they like over those they don't) and build strong relationships with others, which leads to new opportunities.
Ask candidates, "Who has been a great mentor to you, and how was that manifested?" The answer to this question will give you some clues about candidates' relationships with others. Likable candidates typically attract better mentors and describe those relationships in a more positive way.

Curiosity. People who are curious about their own potential and are willing to try new tasks and roles are better able to adapt to change, challenge themselves, and grow as team members. Ask candidates, "Do you have any questions about the position or the company?" Candidates need to impress you, just as you need to impress them. People who don't ask good questions—or any at all—won't be the type of employees you want because they won't push the boundaries or challenge the status quo.