

# Personal Excellence



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EASY, BUT IT CAN  
BE LIVED WELL**

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Software Company

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Editor, Personal Excellence

## Start Living A More Meaningful Life Today

Can we live a blissful and meaningful life? Is there any secret to happiness? Although it is impossible to live a life without ups and downs, if you appreciate every little thing you have, you can live peacefully. And most often, we spend time worrying about the future and staying back in the past. To enjoy the present, we should live in the present. Check out this edition of **Personal Excellence** that offers valuable tips to live a better life.

On the cover, we have Kevin Kehoe's article, **Life Is Not Easy, But It Can Be Lived Well** that talks about ways to make the journey of life easier. According to Kevin, regardless of how you learn to live your life, if you want to accomplish anything meaningful, and feel productive and happy, you must learn to deal with people. In the article, he puts forth his guiding mission, central values, and rules for dealing with people.

You used to love going to work and were inspired to find solutions to your challenges. But now, you are struggling to focus and you find yourself wandering on social media, Tik Tok or Pinterest, counting down the time to close your laptop. You could also be secretly scrolling through job portals in the hopes to search for inspiration for the rut you find yourself in. While you still have the opportunity to find inspiration and a new love for what you do, check out a few recommendations to revitalise your cur-

rent job in Anja van Beek's article, **Not Ready To Quit Your Job? Here's How To Revitalize It Instead.**

Did you know that our personality type has a big effect on how happy we are at work? John Hackston's article, **Is Choosing Your Career A Game Of Chance?** talks about the relation between understanding personality and choosing a career.

Arts like music and dance have been powerful tools to heal the body and soul. It helps us tap into our deepest emotions and express and feel what can't be articulated through words. How can the positive effects of these arts help you heal? Read Antoinette Allen's article, **The Healing Benefits Of Music And Dance** to learn that and more. Also read Stephanie Diamond's article, **Solo Female Travel: Best Trips & Tips** that lists down tips for women who are planning to travel.

In brief, we have hand-picked 10 articles for you that can help you on your path toward personal and professional development and will surely go a long way towards improving your life skills.

We hope you enjoy reading all the articles and get back to us with your valuable feedback.

Cheers!

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# Life Is Not Easy, But It Can Be Lived Well

My guiding mission, central values, and rules for dealing with people



By [Kevin Kehoe](#), The Aspire Software Company

Life is not easy. No one provides you with a handbook or a copy of, *Life For Dummies*, for you to read and master the essentials. So, what can any of us do to make the journey easier? For one, you can find a mentor. That's a really good idea. I wish I had done more of that. You can read books. I did lots of that and it was very helpful. Or you can learn the hard way by trial and error. I did a lot of this, and even wrote a book about it.

Regardless of how you learn to live your life, if you want to accomplish anything meaningful, and feel productive and happy, you must learn to deal with people. There's no avoiding them. And unless you elect the "cabin in the woods – off the grid" approach to life, you're going to have to *go to school* and master the fundamentals of human nature. When I discovered this reality, somewhere during my life's journey, I began to pay attention to the ways people behaved, the ways

I responded, and then the ways they responded to me. This may sound exhausting, but it's really not. And the rewards were good, because by doing this I ultimately developed what I consider the three core elements of "living life responsibly."

To be clear, this idea is just my definition of living responsibly. I'm pretty certain I have not uncovered any deep secret, nor have I created and added some new and earth-shattering revelations to our general academic understanding of human nature. That's likely because, as my book's subtitle points out, I'm just an average guy. But what I did "discover" and develop into my own ethos and "handbook for life" were my **guiding mission**, my **central values**, and my **rules** for dealing with people. As I collected experiences, I formulated these things chiefly by trying to "do the right" at the moment. And like most of us, I sometimes succeeded and I sometimes failed, but I always learned and documented these lessons so I would not make the same mistake twice.

Even today, this process continues, if only because I am endlessly fascinated by human nature, even when I feel less "warm fuzzies" for individual humans. I hope that doesn't sound too harsh as it is not meant to be. But it's true and it's an essential truth to address if I am to keep adding to my rules. Right now, I have about twenty or so rules. They are simple and memorable, which makes them useful for me. Enough theory, let's make this more realistic by looking at my guiding mission, my central values, and my rules.

**Guiding mission** is the big-picture purpose that guides all my decisions – at least in theory. My mission is to be a good *guy and leave the place better than I found it*. It's pretty simple and as it turns out, highly actionable, but not always as easy as it sounds.

**Central values** are part belief system and part principle. Over the years, I have wrestled with these, and at the moment, I have six that I like, which influence everything I do.

- **Excellence** – If something is worth doing, it is worth doing to the highest level of my capability.

- **Service** – The world does not revolve around me. I am my best self when I act in the service of others.
- **Sacrifice** – There are no free lunches. I must be willing to give up something to achieve anything important.
- **Integrity** – I strive to practice what I preach, and failing that, strive to shut up. I want to be worthy of my friend's trust.
- **Responsibility** – I will not be a victim or point a finger at others. I first look inside and see where I went wrong.
- **Generosity** – This is a general theme for me – *give more than you take*.

**Rules** are lessons learned whether they are learned from a mentor, a book, or from life's hard knocks on the head. These rules are behavioral, actionable and, for me, common sensical. If you need an analogy to understand what a rule is as I understand them, think Leroy Jethro Gibbs' rules on the TV show – *NCIS*. My rules are simple and easy to remember. They help me to act consistently, which is very important to my friends and colleagues. And they enable me to make decisions and judgments without over-thinking or belaboring every situation as if it's the first time it's happened. My rules *are* flexible at the same time they are firm. Here are a few of them.

- **Show up** – Woody Allen stated that 90% of life is showing up. I have found this to be true. I almost always show up because I never know when something great might happen.
- **Karma is a bitch** – Treat people with the care they deserve, and as you would want to be treated. Poor behavior is a boomerang. It will come back to you. I've witnessed it many times.
- **Choose the high road** – In many of life's situations you have only one shot, ONE TIME to act. There are no "do-overs". Take the high road regardless and deal with what happens.
- **Don't believe your own press** – Leave your ego at home. In business, my mantra was: Get in early, stay late, and stay humble. I've seen too many of the smartest guys in the room fail spectacularly.



- **We all work for someone** – If everyone adopted this one rule, the world would be a much better place in which to live. Even when I was the CEO, I worked for my people and my customers.
- **Don't drink the Kool-Aid** – Don't confuse going along and agreement with being a good team player, especially when the "right" course of action is *disagreement*. Groupthink is a disease that destroys culture.
- **It takes thick skin to win** – If you are outraged and offended by every remark or point of view of someone with whom you disagree, you are going to have an unhappy life. I've watched people who are like this – always outraged by other people. They exhaust *me*, watching them build up the hate and keep score. I can only imagine how exhausted they must be holding on to so much. Here's an idea – you're not *that* important in the big scheme of things that you can't be offended, even unjustly, on occasion. So just take the punch, roll over, and move onto happier things. That's my rule... and if you can AVOID that type of person in the future, even better.

Life isn't easy, but it can be lived well. And living well, means living responsibly... and a big part of that, as Socrates taught us, is to look inside and live a life examined.



**Kevin Kehoe** is the author **ONE HIT WONDER: The Real-Life Adventures Of An Average Guy And Lessons He Learned Along The Way**. Kehoe has worked in the hotel, restaurant, business consulting, and software industries. He co-founded Aspire Software based on the belief that the landscape industry needed a completely cloud-based mobile platform offering true, end-to-end functionality that was supported by a comprehensive customer success program. Prior to co-founding Aspire Software, he was a nationally recognized consultant for more than 35 years.



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# Not Ready To Quit Your Job? Here's How To Revitalize It Instead

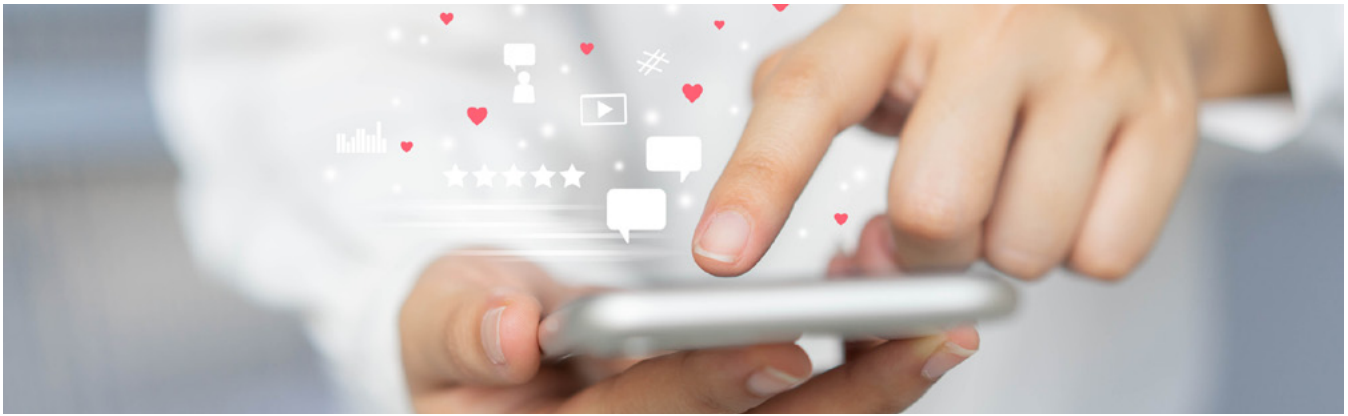
| Finding that spark in the job you used love



 By **Anja van Beek**, Anja van Beek Consulting & Coaching

You used to love going to work (or in the hybrid world, doing the work) and were inspired to find solutions to your challenges. You used to thrive on that energy. But now, you are struggling to focus and you find yourself wandering on social media, Tik Tok or Pinterest, counting down the time to close your laptop. You could also be secretly scrolling through job portals in the hopes to search for inspiration for the rut you find yourself in.

But, it isn't as clear-cut as you would want it to be, especially in the current climate where you should 'just be too happy to have a job.' Let's be honest – the past year had its unique challenges – from working while being at home, home-schooling your primary school child(ren) and managing your full-time job as well. And to top it, the expectation to be 'innovative' adds another layer to this complex situation.



A Microsoft survey of more than 30,000 global workers showed that [41% of workers were considering quitting or changing professions](#) this year. That's a very high number!

There are a variety of reasons why team members are looking for a change, to what some economists refer to as the "Great Resignation." The pandemic shifted some employees' priorities, pushing them to seek a "dream career" or move to be a stay-at-home parent. And then there are the colleagues that decided to quit because of how their employer treated them these last 18 months.

Enough has been said that the grass isn't always greener on the other side... but rather water the current garden you have, especially in a country that has such a high unemployment rate.

While you still have the opportunity to find inspiration and a new love for what you do, **here are a few recommendations to revitalize your current job.**

### 1. Get a Mentor (or Two)

Many of us can vouch for the benefit of having a mentor. Conversations with an experienced person to soundboard your ideas and to learn from their life and career lessons are priceless. There is a lot of value in taking the lessons shared and finding understanding and appreciation to impact your decisions and career choices.

What I have learned from my mentor are the benefits of building a network and how to embrace the currency of generosity, this simply means to be open

to share knowledge and be helpful without expecting in return.

I had more than one mentor... one with a specific HR, functional perspective and another from a broader business strategy and personal perspective. My HR mentor has guided me on how to handle sensitive matters; some tricky Industrial Relationship issues and how to handle them with a human-centric approach not only a tick box exercise where you let someone go.

### 2. Find Your Spark

By finding meaning in your work, you can have a significant impact on optimizing your performance. The key skill to enhance your personal agility is **purposefulness**. When you focus on your inherent strengths and passions you will be able to better identify how to use these to benefit and contribute to the wider team. This will have an immediate impact on your sense of making a meaningful contribution which directly impacts your sense of belonging.

As professionals, we are tempted to "fix" something, meaning we focus on our weaknesses, instead of building our innate strengths. To discover your innate strengths, make a list of activities that you do during a normal week. Record which activities make you excited, the ones where you are lost in time. Things that you do effortlessly, should be an indication that your natural strengths.

Now that you have identified your strengths and gifts, share them with the world. Consider how you can serve others. Sometimes, a change of scenery is

all that is needed to find that spark. It could also be that you feel more energised when you help others. For example: assisting a different cross-functional team with a major project. This could also help your reputation to be a reliable and valuable resource and help to trigger some newfound energy in your problem-solving capabilities.

### 3. Find the 'Self' in Leadership

How are you directing the energy you use? How do you choose to see the world? By practicing daily to consciously choose how you look at the world, will influence your thinking, feeling and actions. This is a critical aspect when you want to revive your job.

Our brains are like Velcro – noticing (and sometimes, obsessing) about the negative first. Be intentional about finding the benefit in your role and the value and impact you are making for the clients and team members.

Another step of self-leadership is to consider if you are being biased. A bias is simply an automatic response we use to navigate the world to react quickly without thinking. What mental shortcuts do you have in place that impacts the way you view your current role and may need some adjustment? For example, if you are in a brainstorming session and you tend to like or dislike a suggestion from one of the team members, ask yourself: "If this suggestion was made by someone else, would I also like or dislike the idea as much as I do"

### 4. Build the Blocks in Your (Career) Mosaic

The traditional way of career pathing is outdated. A concept we teach in Agile HR is called a *career mosaic*. This means careers are much more flexible with a focus on individual development and a value-add to both the organization and a person.

You should take ownership of your development -- don't wait for a manager or an HR initiative, and start a conversation about your future and be open about your aspirations and dreams.

In closing, consider the role of self-care when reviving your role and career. Ask yourself if you have

sufficient habits in place to be resilient and operate in a high-performance mode. Self-care is a critical component and solid research back the benefits of nourishing your soul with journaling, silencing the mind and mindfulness.

One of my coaching clients, a mom of two boys, which is heading up a successful department, mentioned she doesn't have time for herself. She laughed when I suggested doing an exercise of mindful breathing for 20 minutes a day. After a few months of coaching her, she now lives for her 20 minutes of 'me'-time.

Consider what you can commit to. Perhaps 3 x 5 minutes of mindful breathing, perhaps a morning routine which includes some exercising. Decide what works for you. You need to invest time to create daily rhythms and routines you can benefit from. These rhythms and routines will support you to be able to cope better with the challenges you find in your career and as a result, you will then find joy in the career journey.



**Anja van Beek** is an Agile Talent Strategist, Leadership Expert and Executive Coach. As an international, highly sought-after coach, speaker, trainer and published author, Anja has more than 20 years of experience, enhancing the performance of individual executives, teams and organizations. Anja was one of the first to be authorized as an Agile People professional and facilitator. She partners with leaders and HR teams on all people-related aspects with a specific focus on integrating agile principles and practices. She is a leadership coach and an expert in supporting teams to remain relevant and thrive in the future of work. She also works for various companies as a facilitator focusing on leadership development, mentoring and change management.



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Have you been doing some amazing work in HR that you should be recognized for? Do you want to acknowledge a client that you have been working with on a successful HR initiative?

HR West is bringing back The California HR Excellence Awards and it's time to nominate your program! The 2nd annual awards will celebrate successes in HR on the west coast and recognize companies and individuals across the entire spectrum of human resources. These awards acknowledge an industry fostered by leadership, service, innovation, support, and principle, which have continuously driven us forward.

**Nominate Now**

Winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on the last day of HR West taking place March 8-9, 2022 in-person in Oakland, California and also virtually. HR West is the leading conference in California for forward-thinking HR professionals seeking leading-edge professional development, HR solutions, and connections with peers.

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[Nominate Now](#)

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HR Leader of the Year

**Susan Gellatly**

HR Leader of the Year

**Maria Castro**

Emerging HR Leader of the year (under 40)

**Chamroean Trinidad**

### Corporate Awards



Most Effective Employee Communication and Engagement  
Sierra View Medical Center



Best Overall Recruiting Strategy  
Golden State Warriors



Best Culture Initiative  
Retrophin



Best Wellness Program  
CSAA Insurance Group

# Put The Power Of Words To Work In Your Life

## | The words we choose can make all the difference

 By **Jim Stovall**, Narrative Television Network

Words have a great impact on our lives. While they are imperfect, they are the only tools we have to communicate our thoughts, hopes, and dreams. I have long believed that whoever controls the language controls the debate. The words we use matter to everyone in our lives, and most significantly, our own words matter to each of us. I'm a big believer that we should remove or greatly minimize our use of the word *can't*. When we think or say the word *can't*, we are reinforcing our lack of resources or the inability to achieve a certain task or goal.

Let's say you have decided to follow a more healthy nutrition plan, and while enjoying dinner at a friend's home, they offer you a dessert that is not a part of your new plan. Your first reaction might be to say, "I can't have dessert." This signals weakness and inability in your own mind and to anyone with whom you are communicating. On the other hand, if you respond, "I don't eat desserts," this communicates power and control in that you have made a decision, and you are choosing to honor the decision you have made. While this may seem like an insignificant difference in semantics, the words we choose can make all the difference.

My late, great friend and mentor, Zig Ziglar often contrasted two different ways to say the same thing, which he discovered when he was dating his future wife. While the phrase, "You look like the first breath of spring" and the phrase, "You look like the end of a long, hard winter" might denote the same point in time, they do not communicate the same message. Just as the phrase, "When I'm with you, time stands

still" is quite different from, "Your presence can stop a clock."

While Zig's examples are humorous, they point out the fact that words matter because they represent, communicate, and reinforce our thoughts and ideas.

Listen carefully to the words you use to share your ideas and emotions with those around you. More importantly, be aware of the words you use with yourself as you think about who you are, what you want to do, and where you want to go. *Can't* describes your weakness and inability to do something, while *don't* describes a decision you have made to control your actions and your future.

As you go through your day today, put the power of words to work in your life.

Today's the day!

• • •



**Jim Stovall** is the President of Narrative Television Network as well as a published author of many books including *The Ultimate Gift*. He is also a columnist and motivational speaker.



▶ Would you like to comment?

# The Healing Benefits Of Music And Dance

| Find the melody, then move



By **Antoinette Allen, Ph.D.** Two Cups of TLC, LLC

There's just something about dancing to your favorite music that seems to take away all the cares in the world.

From the earliest days of civilization, music has been a powerful tool to heal the body and soul. It helps us tap into our deepest emotions and express and feel what can't be articulated through words.

Other than its entertaining value, music also does a lot of wonders under the surface.

Especially for your mental health, so much so that [music](#) and [dance](#) therapy are professionally used to heal a myriad of mental health and mood disorders.

So, how have earlier civilizations harnessed the healing powers of

dancing and music, and how can the positive effects of these arts help you heal?

## The History of Music for Healing

The concept of using music for therapeutic purposes is not new. In Ancient Greece, it was believed that music had a mathematical relationship with the cosmos. The [Ancient Greek Philosophers](#)

believed in the healing powers of music to such an extent that healing shrines housed hymn specialists alongside physicians. Patients in manic states were prescribed the calming music of flutes, while those suffering from depression were told to listen to dulcimer music.

And interestingly, music was among the first treatments for a hangover from alcohol.

The healing powers of music were recognized and adopted by plenty of later civilizations as well. Drumming is a sacred act among [Native Americans](#). It symbolizes the heartbeat of Mother Earth and is used to help in healing the sick as a way of carrying prayers and songs. Music has been one of the initial tools still used by Native Indian tribes for the treatment of a wide range of mental illnesses, physical conditions, and personality disorders, as well as inducing relaxation and increasing the intensity of shamanic experiences.

Similarly, Vimbuza is a healing dance popularly used by Tumbuka tribes in [Africa](#), and it remains a fundamental part of the indigenous healthcare traditions. The patients suffering from mental illnesses are treated by using a combination of singing, drumming, and dancing. For the Tumbuka tribes, the artistic and therapeutic value of Vimbuza compliments other forms of medical treatments.

## Using Music in the Workplace

Employees are actively seeking for creative ways to connect with

each other. Considering the pandemic and the increase of remote work, music may be a mechanism for you to build virtual camaraderie. As an arts-based instructor, I implement music, dance, poetry, and art into my design and delivery because it allows learners to connect with the content in a powerful way. I encourage you to find your personal theme song. What is the soundtrack music that plays as you walk the halls of your organization? What soundtrack is currently playing in your daily life? Having your teammates share songs that describe the current state of the team's morale or mood can give you keen insight into the emotions employees may never verbally express. Once you have gathered these songs, you could create a team playlist and spotlight one song a week. These little specialized team exercises are memorable and allow all team members to impact and improve the team culture.

## The Healing Benefits of Music and Dance for Mental Health

Research has proven that music has beneficial effects on [brain chemicals](#) associated with feelings of pleasure and love dopamine and oxytocin while at the same time lowering the stress hormone cortisol.

Furthermore, music is the language of emotional expressions because it is processed directly in the [amygdala](#), a part of the brain responsible for processing mood and emotions.

When paired with dancing, the compound benefits of these arts can have tremendous impacts on your mind and body. Let's look at some down below.

### Helps express intricate emotions and reduces anxiety and depression

Music allows you to [let your emotions](#) out without having to say anything. It's a way to process and dissolve the feelings that are too complex to talk about. You might have noticed that listening to angry music is therapeutic when we're stressed or angry. When you dance while listening to music, your heart rate increases, and it works your muscles. This further facilitates the release of 'feel-good' chemicals in the body. It also serves as a distraction to escape the repetitive negative thoughts and instantly shifts your mood. A study showed that listening to instrumental, classic, or ambient music reduced anxiety symptoms up to [65%](#) in participants.

### Improves your mood and provides motivation

Anyone who has taken a dance or yoga class can confirm the tremendous impact it can have on your mood. Listening to uplifting tracks can help us quickly change our outlook on things. The emotional triggers in a song can change how you perceive a situation and make you think more positively. Dancing can make you physically fit, and it is a healthy way to express your emotions and vent off. Furthermore, listening to upbeat tracks can help improve your willpower and give you a





motivational boost to get up and get going. Researchers have found that listening to fast-paced music can make people [work better](#). That's why you find it easier to exercise more intensely when you're listening to music.

### Improves memory, confidence, and cognitive function

Physical movements in dancing increase the flow of blood to your brain and help improve its working capacity. [Binaural beats](#) are special kinds of beats designed to provide a boost to your brain. Using alpha waves from 8-14hz is proven to help your mind get into a more sharpened and confident state. These beats are ideal when you are feeling nervous, out of focus, fatigued, or anxious. Your brain tries to sync with the frequencies in the binaural beats and switches itself to a more happy, focused, and confident sense of being.

### It provides an instant and safe escape

As a child, I wanted to be a dancer, it was my earliest career goal. Little did I know that my first formal dance opportunities would happen while serving in the military. Dance became my escape from a very regimented life. I have danced for the past 25 years to tell stories and express emotions. When I am dancing, I experience a sense of connection, euphoria, and freedom that I don't otherwise have. Often, we're too consumed by overwhelming emotions that it can make us harm ourselves, others or say and do things that we later regret. We need an instant and safe way to quickly turn over our mood without doing anything regrettable. Music and dancing are some of the safest and most effective ways to express your anger, irritability, or sadness, etc., and get back to normal in a short amount of time.

Arts like dancing and music have helped people improve their mental health for centuries, and it still proves to be an enjoyable and effective remedy to this day. Feeling blue? Thinking you might burst due to anger? Take a pause, put on your favorite track, go out and take a walk or simply dance to your favorite tunes like no one's watching and see how instantly that negativity loses its grip over you.

#### Resources Used:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/dance-therapy-and-eating-disorder-treatment-5094952>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/music-therapy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/surprising-psychological-benefits-of-music-4126866>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.starquestdance.com/benefits-of-dance-on-mental-health/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/info-2020/music-mental-health.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.openminds.org.au/news/5-positive-effects-music-mental-health>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/mental-benefits-of-dance>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.palladiumprivate.com/blog/6-benefits-of-music-for-your-mental-health/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://petersonfamilyfoundation.org/news/the-history-of-music-therapy/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://discoverymood.com/blog/music-therapy-and-mental-health/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/how-music-affects-mental-health>



**Antoinette L. Allen**, Ph.D is the owner and Chief Storyteller at Two Cups of TLC, LLC where she works to help individuals and leaders embrace their authentic self. She is passionate about encouraging cultures of forgiveness and the pursuit of healing. She is skilled at facilitating and speaking on crucial and confrontational topics such as race relations and traumatic events. She is best known for her lively discussions and engaging learning atmosphere created by experiential learning practices and arts-based methodologies. She is the author of the book, **Bras, Bootstraps and the Bible: Stories of Resilience**.



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# Can Wisdom Help You Live A Better Life?

The fewer mistakes you make in life will be generally due to increased wisdom

By [Tim Connor](#), Connor Resource Group

Many people today believe that a mind full of information or even knowledge is all it takes to succeed, be happy, or feel content with life. Sorry to say – they are all wrong. What is required for sustained success, inner peace and happiness that is not dependent on what you own or your position - is wisdom.

Just because you have 300 icons on your computer or iPad giving you instant access to more information than you can ever assimilate or use will not lead to a life lived with wisdom, common sense or maturity. What it takes is true wisdom and wisdom can only be developed through a combination of information that contributes to knowledge and knowledge that along with experience equals wisdom.

The common myth today is that if you have access to a lot of information or know a lot, you are wise – sorry folks. Mark Twain once said, *“We shouldn’t call it common sense because so few people have it – it’s not common. We need to start calling it uncommon sense.”*

Proverbs (if you have never read this book of Scripture) are filled with simple concepts (but not simple to achieve) about the importance of wisdom in a well-lived life.

**Wisdom** -The ability to make sensible decisions and judgments based on personal knowledge and experience. I have to say – this is the first dictionary

definition I can totally agree with. The accumulated knowledge of life or of a sphere of activity that has been gained through experience.

So, who doesn’t have wisdom? Well, it depends on the life area. A lawyer might know the law but do they have life wisdom? A scientist might have scientific knowledge but can they drive responsibly? Yes, a physician has medical knowledge but do they have common courtesy or people skills? A math instructor might know formulas and numbers but can they relate to others on a different topic? Just because a politician can get elected doesn’t mean they should have been when it comes to common sense, wisdom or even general knowledge. I could go on with these examples, but let me be perfectly clear, I know many of the above that have both specific knowledge and wisdom but, I have to tell you I have met a lot of people around the world in various professions who thought they knew it all but in reality they were just downright stupid when it came to wisdom.

And before I go on, I want to admit that when it comes to information and knowledge I am seriously lacking, which is one of the reasons I read two books a week, but that still doesn’t make me the smartest person in the room if I don’t know how to use what I am learning or when and how to apply it to real-life situations.

## What Prevents Us from Attaining Wisdom?

There are many factors, but the most dominant ones are; ego, arrogance, fear, low self-esteem,



self-righteousness, narcissism and insecurity. All of these can get in the way - preventing us from admitting that we don't know something or we are just stupid and arrogant that prevents us from acquiring the necessary experience that is blended with the knowledge to add to our overall ability to handle life successfully.

Ever done something stupid? Did you learn from it or did you make the same mistake again? I know I have done more stupid things than I care to admit but in the end, in most cases (I'm not perfect) I learned the necessary lesson and didn't make the same mistake again. Oh sure, on a few occasions I made a similar mistake again, but justified it with the reasons above. So you might ask, what gives me the right to write this article? Great question. I don't have the right to write it from the perspective of someone who claims to have a great deal of wisdom but someone who wants to share what I have learned.

### How Do We Achieve Wisdom?

Well, the first thing you need to do is admit to yourself that you don't know something that you need to know to have a better (more successful, happier or more contented) life. Once you have done this there are several things you can do;

- Read more.
- Get a mentor.
- Hire a personal, career or business coach.
- Start asking yourself better questions.
- Start being more honest with yourself about your weaknesses or areas that need to change or improve.
- When you experience a negative in life keep asking yourself – why and how – until you get to the truth.

- Start keeping a life journal and record everything – good decisions, bad decisions, good actions, bad actions, outcomes, reasons etc.

### What Wisdom Do We Need?

This is an easy one – where are you tending to make the most mistakes, bad decisions or choices or actions in life. This would be a great place to start.

### How Can Wisdom Help You Live a Better Life?

I'm going to let you stew on this one to see if you got any value from this article. Make a list of where you need more or better wisdom, where you can get it, why you haven't achieved it yet. . . . keep going with these questions.

#### *Lets' wrap it up.*

The fewer mistakes you make in life will be generally due to increased wisdom but keep in mind – none of us can know it all, learn it all or experience it all, so sooner or later we are going to learn wisdom the hard way or we are not going to learn it no matter how hard the lesson was – it's a choice we all make every day in every circumstance.

*"The best part of our knowledge is that which teaches us where knowledge leaves off and ignorance begins. With this understanding, we can create wisdom."*

**O.W. Holmes**



**Tim Connor** is a global speaker, trainer and bestselling author (over 80 books). During his career, Tim has helped millions of people and hundreds of organizations around the world improve their sales, management and leadership effectiveness, employee performance and life success.



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# To Zoom With Video On Or Video Off, That Is The Question

Just because you can use video doesn't mean you have to: Professor Jeremy Bailenson

 By Terry Simpson, Nintex

When the pandemic first hit and businesses across the globe had to quickly pivot to remote work, video meetings became a key tool. Employees worldwide soon became accustomed to spending what felt like endless hours in video conferences.

We learned how efficient meeting virtually could be. We no longer had to commute from home to the office. We could move from one meeting to the next with the touch of a button. Unfortunately, that efficiency led to an explosion of video meetings, with many of us spending days in back-to-back meetings, staring at our screens, causing what's been dubbed [Zoom fatigue](#).

In February, Professor Jeremy Bailenson, the founding director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab, published a ground-breaking article about Zoom fatigue in "[Technology, Mind and Behavior](#)." In an [interview](#) about his work, Professor Bailenson said, "Videoconferencing is a good thing for remote communication, but just think about the medium – just because you can use video doesn't mean you have to."

Wise words that, unfortunately, are being largely ignored. According to an [Asana](#) survey of 13,000 global workers, 71% of workers experienced burnout

in 2020. Part of that undoubtedly stems from excessive video meetings, so organizations might want to take note and offer solutions to relieve their employees – and maybe give them back a bit of time.

## Do We Really Need This Meeting?

It's a lot easier to ask for a remote meeting than for an in-person meeting, since the request doesn't have to be made face-to-face, which increases the number of meeting requests we all get. This is problematic because we aren't all working in the same time zone, which means that meetings are happening outside of normal business hours for some participants. That's okay once in a while, but more meetings mean that longer days have become the norm rather than the exception.

This problem is compounded by the proliferation of recurring meetings. It's become far too easy for someone to suggest a particular meeting should happen every week. Suddenly, you have an hour blocked off on your calendar every week. Again, that may not be a problem with one meeting, but multiply that by five or 10, and we're headed for burnout. So before scheduling a meeting or setting up a recurring meeting, we need to ask ourselves whether it's truly necessary or if the issue can be handled via email, phone or automation.



### Do We Really Need an Hour?

When scheduling meetings, we're all accustomed to throwing out 30-minute or one-hour blocks because that's the way our calendars are structured. But do you really need that much time? Maybe less time will suffice. One strategy I employ is to schedule meetings for 10 minutes after the hour, which gives participants with back-to-back meetings a short break. Similarly, if the meeting is scheduled for an hour but the business is wrapped up sooner, end it early and give the team back that time.

### Do We Really Need to Be on Video?

Video meetings are great if you need to look at documents, but if the meeting is more of a discussion or creative brainstorming session, consider scheduling a conference call instead. That way, participants aren't tethered to their desks. I know one executive who paces back and forth during phone calls and another who walks outside. This gives team members a badly needed break from sitting at their desks, and it can be easier to focus without the distraction of video – not to mention movement also stimulates creativity, so the meeting will likely be more productive and yield better results.

### Are We Practicing Good Zoom Etiquette?

If you're in a meeting in a conference room, chances are the team will be engaged and paying attention. As we all know, that's not always the case on video conferences, where it's easy to become distracted by messages popping up on another screen. I've seen individuals stop talking mid-sentence because they

were distracted. A further problem is that the increase of meetings means, many workers are pressed for time, so they sometimes come to meetings unprepared and/or multitask during the meeting itself.

A side effect of bad Zoom etiquette is that you can build a real lack of trust with your colleagues, partners or customers. We can address the problem by scheduling fewer and shorter meetings, but regardless, we need to give participants the respect they deserve by being prepared and laser-focused at every meeting.

A few other ways we can practice good etiquette is to include an agenda in the meeting invitation so folks can prepare, make sure you're technologically capable of joining the meeting on time and mute yourself when not speaking. Last, when scheduling a meeting, check all the participants' calendars to ensure they're available. This is particularly important with key participants. There's nothing more frustrating than getting into a meeting and essential people aren't there.

There's nothing inherently wrong with video meetings. Indeed, they've enabled the world to work remotely. But we need to be smart about the way we employ them and mindful of how they affect our work. We'd be wise to remember the words of Professor Bailenson, "Just because you can use video doesn't mean you have to."



**Terry Simpson** is a senior solutions engineer at Nintex, the global standard for process management and automation. He is an experienced PMP-certified project manager, consultant, trainer and speaker at numerous SharePoint events including SP Tech Con, Nintex User Groups, SharePoint Conference.ORG, SUGDC, SUGATL, and SharePoint Saturday events around the country.



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# Solo Female Travel: Best Trips & Tips

Reconnecting with oneself, a growing travel goal for women



By **Stephanie Diamond**, Global Rescue

The travel and tourism industry has seen significant growth in solo female travel and women-only tour operators. According to 2020–21 data by [Condor Ferries](#), travel companies dedicated to woman-only customers have increased by 230% over the past few years.

[Sisterhood of the Outdoors](#) has guided hunting and fishing trips to women who love the outdoors. [WHOA Travel](#), a boutique adventure company for women by women, offers adventures on four continents. [Women's Hiking Crew](#) is a hiking community for women. [Finatical Flyfishing](#) provides women-only

worldwide fly fishing trips, complete with female guides.

The travel experiences women are looking for today focus on learning new activities and reconnecting with nature and people.

Many viewers of the 2021 Olympic summer games who watched the debut of the female surfing competition were inspired to learn the sport. It is what 60% of the guests do at Costa Rica's [Kalon Surf](#), a luxury resort and surf camp.



“We have built an experience that helps our guests to relax and recharge by learning or improving their surfing in a beautiful, paradise-like setting full of comfort,” said Kjeld Schigt, founder of Kalon. “You spend every day in the ocean while having fun, having a smile on all the time and connecting with yourself and others again.”

More women are traveling solo but that doesn't mean you are always exclusively traveling as a party of one. Sixty percent of female travelers who sign up for [WHOA Travel's classic adventures](#) – group travel adventure tour with pre-set dates – come solo, meaning they arrive knowing no one. But by the time the program ends, they leave with a new set of friends – and a totally new sense of competence.

“When you face a challenge, like summiting Africa's Kilimanjaro or trekking Iceland's glacial terrain, and have these other women to lift you along the way, it forms an incredible bond that lasts,” said Allison Fleece, who co-founded the woman-focused adventure travel company in 2015 with fellow adventure enthusiast Danielle Thornton.

“It can be intimidating to take the plunge and sign up for these kinds of activities,” Fleece said. “But when you know you're doing it with like-bodied or similar-in-age women, you're all the more encouraged and empowered.”

Self-care, or reconnecting with oneself, is a growing travel goal for women. Imagine staying at a retreat hidden in a 22-acre jungle oasis in Costa Rica. You're 10 minutes from the beach, steps away from nature paths and a private waterfall and treated to meals crafted by a five-star vegan chef. Then pair it with your favorite activity: yoga. It's what you'll find at the [Imiloa Institute](#).

Relinking with nature is another priority among female travelers. Saint Brandon is an ideal place for a digital detox. Located to the northeast of Mauritius, Saint Brandon is a paradise-like island country in the Indian Ocean well-suited for anglers, free divers, kite surfers and nature lovers.

Unfortunately, women of all ages must contend with certain risks on the road. Solo travel, for women and men, means taking some additional [precautions](#).

Having a communications device that works under all circumstances and obtaining emergency medical evacuation protection are essential. Completing a deep research dive about your destination will help prevent cultural faux pas. Keeping your family or friends aware of your itinerary with schedule check-ins is an important lifeline to keep active.

While all forms of travel ground to a halt during the pandemic, the statistics showed that solo female travel was on the rise. As travel returns, solo trips are likely one of the first segments expected to bounce back with tour operators reporting an uptick in solo female travel bookings.



**Stephanie Diamond** is a veteran international human resources expert who has lived and worked in several different countries. She's currently VP Human Capital Management for Global Rescue, the leading provider of medical, security, evacuation and travel risk management services.



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# Is Choosing Your Career A Game Of Chance?

The appliance of science – understanding personality and choosing a career



By **John Hackston**, The Myers-Briggs Company

When we were very young, choosing a career seemed to be very straightforward. We just knew that we were destined to be a rock star, an astronaut, a sporting legend... whatever we wanted to be. Of course, by the time we get to choosing a job for real, most of us have had to rethink our original ideas. But when it comes to deciding on a career, what we do isn't necessarily a great deal more scientific than our ideas from back in elementary school.

Some people just go with whatever's easiest, whatever seems to come along first. Others choose a job that

brings in the big bucks, or at least has the potential to do so. Many individuals are influenced by what their friends or parents think, or by what people with their qualifications usually do, or by whatever is fashionable at the time. And if you end up in a job that makes you miserable, then you can always go through the same process a few years down the line – probably with no greater a guarantee of success.

## The Importance of Personality

In choosing a career, it's odd that many of us don't really give a great deal of thought to what makes us

unique, what makes us, well, us: our personality. We might think that this is less important than our abilities or qualifications, that we can fit in anywhere and enjoy and do well in a job that matches our skills, but this really isn't the case. Our personality type has a big effect on how happy we are at work. Put simply, people with different personality preferences are happiest in different jobs.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment, published by my company, is probably the most widely used personality questionnaire in the world. Hundreds of thousands of people have completed it over the last few years. As part of our ongoing research, most have also told us a little more about themselves, including:

- The type of job they have
- How satisfied they were with their job

We've been able to gather job satisfaction data on over 560,000 employed adults, covering 300 different occupations. We used this to create statistical models to predict how satisfied someone would be in each of these jobs, and similar roles, based on how they answered the MBTI assessment. Specifically, we can calculate the probability of someone being very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or dissatisfied in each occupation based on their personality preferences. The models are updated as more data comes in; new people are completing the MBTI assessment all the time.

### Using Personality Data in Career Choice

If your predicted satisfaction level for a job is higher than average, you are likely to find that occupation more satisfying than most people. Of course, job satisfaction isn't everything, but higher levels of job satisfaction are related to greater well-being, engagement, organizational commitment, and job performance. In other words, it's good for you and good for your organization.

Also, looking at possible careers in terms of personality-job fit may throw up intriguing new possibilities that you hadn't thought of before. Of course, ability, qualifications, training and so on are all still important, and a lack of these may

make some careers unfeasible. But personality can be an excellent starting point for your career search, stripping away preconceptions and widening horizons.

Understanding more about your personality is important in other ways, for example by helping job seekers adapt their natural communication style to create more persuasive job applications. And knowing your personality can help you leverage your strengths and avoid pitfalls when it comes to the job search process.

Tools like the MBTI assessment often form the basis of development programs for individuals once they are in an organization. Maybe it's time for people to use this knowledge to find the right job, and the right occupation, in the first place.



**John Hackston** is a chartered psychologist and Head of Thought Leadership at [The Myers-Briggs Company](#) where he leads the company's Oxford-based research team. He is a frequent commentator on the effects of personality type on work and life, and has authored numerous studies, published papers in peer-reviewed journals, presented at conferences for organizations such as The British Association for Psychological Type, and has written on various type-related subjects in top outlets such as Harvard Business Review.



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# Ten Tips For Productive And Focused Remote Team Meetings

Here's how to get your remote or hybrid team back on track

By **Angela Anastakis**, Nvoicepay

The ever-present opportunity to do other things during online meetings is one of the biggest leadership challenges with remote teams.

We all experience this temptation and see people succumb to it every day. We see it when people have their cameras on and are clearly looking at or doing something else. We see it when gifs and memes start to fly in the chat sidebar, and we see it in the questions people ask later that show they weren't paying attention during the meeting.

I'm just as tempted as the next person to do a quick Teams Chat or email check. I'm guilty of thinking I can multitask when I get a chance, so I make a conscious effort to be present for the duration of the meeting.

When meetings were mostly in person, we used to have a 'phones down/laptops closed' policy to maintain focus on the topic and people. Is it possible to build out similar [norms for remote meetings](#)? Yes, and first it might help to understand what we are dealing with.

## Continuous Partial Attention Problems

If it feels like the longer we're all in the remote and hybrid world, the harder it is for us to focus on the

people and discussion at hand, you're right. Everyone is suffering from online meeting fatigue and most of us are operating in a state of continuous partial attention all day, every day.

[According to Linda Stone](#), a former Microsoft and Apple executive, continuous partial attention—a term that she coined—is different from multitasking. She says that when we multitask, we're trying to be more efficient. Although study after study has shown that humans overestimate their ability to multitask, we can do it well enough when one of the tasks is automatic. We can work and eat lunch at our desk, for example, or watch a movie and do a load of laundry. There are even some small efficiency gains.

Continuous partial attention is motivated by not wanting to miss anything. Our attention may be on one task—such as attending a meeting or just trying to get our work done—but we're constantly scanning for other things that may require our attention—an incoming text, email, or something in our home-work environment.

Attending to each of those things requires our full attention. There are no efficiency gains to be made when you're only able to half-focus. Information and

productivity are lost. Attempting to multitask can actually create opportunities for mistakes, as you forget the information you've learned.

Is it any wonder the knowledge gap between team members is growing and it's getting harder to bring new hires up to speed? Before Covid-19 sent companies into the remote space, the onboarding and training process was tangible. Now, if new employees aren't clear on a task, they're not able to walk down the hall and check-in with their colleagues. Without these spontaneous opportunities for collaboration and learning, it can be harder to keep team members on the same page.

Not only that, continuous, partial attention is an always-on state that prevents us from entering a mode where we can do deep, focused work. It leaves us with no mental downtime, and likely contributes to the burnout so many of us are feeling.

Remote work and online meetings aren't going away. So what can leaders do to [help their teams cope](#) with continuous partial attention during meetings?

## Defining Remote Meeting Norms

The first step is establishing meeting norms. Norms make it easier for people to participate because they know the ground rules. Should they use the raise hand icon, or just jump in? Submit questions via chat?

**Here are ten norms leadership might consider to help keep teams engaged:**

### 1. Have a cameras-on policy

We are all at least a little tired of being on camera. However, when we aren't physically connected, it's important to be virtually connected. One of the ways we do that is visually. I urge leaders to encourage people to keep their cameras on as well as provide any needed support in terms of equipment, backdrops, etc. Some team members may feel more focused off-camera, but you can encourage your team with warm responses to seeing their cameras on.

### 2. Define attendance

We all know that the word "attend" means to be

present. To me, that means being engaged and participative as well. It's imperative that leadership lets people know that's what attending a meeting means. We can encourage our team members to turn off notifications and minimize windows so they won't see pop-up notifications and be tempted. If team members are unable to fully engage, leaders can let them know it's ok to decline the meeting.

### 3. Trim the guest list

Do you need 15 people in the meeting when only 5 are essential? Only invite the people who really need to be there. Leaders may not even be aware of how many virtual meetings team members are being pulled into, so make this part of your regular check-ins. If a team member is in more than four hours of meetings a day, they likely don't have time to actually get their work done.

### 4. Include an agenda in the invite

I like going into a meeting knowing what to expect. With an agenda, meeting participants will be engaged automatically. The agenda should clearly highlight important information, if the meeting is informational or building towards a decision on a specific topic, etc. Sending out any review documentation is another strategy to help orient team members about the meeting well before it even starts. It's much easier to come to a meeting prepared when team members understand the part they'll play in the discussion/decision-making process.

### 5. Ask for helpers

Asking for help makes the meeting easier on the presenter, keeps team members attentive and even allows people to catch pieces of information they may have missed. Consider assigning someone to take notes and perhaps even someone to update the project plan in real time. The more roles you can assign, the better.

### 6. Break the ice

There is nothing worse than an awkward remote meeting. I mean one where you don't even get to check in on one another or speak to the terrible weather you're having in your area. Hosts should make sure all the participants know each other and facilitate introductions when they do not. It's also

important for meeting hosts to make small talk and get participants warmed up. Hosts can also help break the ice by sharing any jokes and asides with online participants as well as in-person.

### 7. Pause for feedback

We know it's harder to read physical cues and context clues virtually, and that might mean you miss out on making your message clear. Make sure to ask if there are any questions and leave time for people to think and unmute. Ask people for their input and be careful not to single anyone out.

### 8. Troubleshoot tech for hybrid meetings

How many hybrid meetings have you been a part of where something technical goes wrong? It's happened to me countless times, but in our remote landscape it's important to make sure the set-up is working before the meeting starts. It's also vital to make sure that online participants can see what those in the room see. Use the right tools to make sure remote and in-person attendees have access to all the same information.

### 9. Improve your presentation skills

It's very hard to stay engaged in a meeting where the dulcet tones of the presenter's voice are lulling you into a daze. Vocal variety--varying your tone and pacing-- helps hold people's interest. So does the use of gestures and facial expressions. Experiment with being a bit more dramatic than you might be in person. Even wearing brighter colors can help hold people's attention. Where possible, use slides/presentation materials to keep people focused on the topic.

### 10. Provide support and training for digital hygiene and burnout

Keeping employees engaged is not a new challenge, but the degree of difficulty has gone up. Be alert for signs of struggle. Signs of digital burnout include feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job, feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job and reduced professional efficacy. If you see these signs in a team member, connect them with the appropriate resources to get help. Consider providing ongoing training

to help people manage the increasing difficulty of digital overstimulation.

## A New Normal

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, complaints about bad (and too many) meetings were not uncommon. The fact that we had to institute phones off/laptops down rules for meetings pre-pandemic, speaks to the fact that continuous partial attention was already a problem. In the past, those rules gave us a shot at getting people's undivided attention--if not their full engagement--during the course of the meeting.

We all know [the new normal](#) is anything but and that remote environment is here for the foreseeable future. Even when we can bring people back to the office, the hybrid model means most people won't be in the office full-time. Finding ways to be productive in this model is the challenge of the decade.

We must first recognize the competition for attention and engagement have intensified and people have fewer avenues of escape from the "always on" online world. In order for teams to make the most of their time together, it's incumbent upon leaders and individuals to work together to come up with ways of managing remote meetings, for the good of the organization and everyone's sanity.

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# Top 5 Challenges Of Managing Remote Employees

## | And how to overcome them

 By **Scott Turner**, Equus Software

Recovering from the pandemic has looked different across the world and across businesses. From sector to sector, the “workplace” now can mean a variety of things. While changes have looked different for employees everywhere, one thing that is hard to deny is that by and large, employees are encouraged by opportunities for better conditions.

Almost 18 months since lockdown began, it’s now a job seeker’s market. In June, [the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported](#) America had a record 10.1 million jobs available. With many companies struggling to fill open positions, adapting to this new reality is key. Companies that don’t offer remote and hybrid work options are going to find themselves unable to compete to attract and retain talent going forward.

With new remote employees, however, there are many considerations businesses must make. Human resources and global mobility managers have been at the frontline of change since the beginning of the pandemic and will need to lead the charge on creating best practices for onboarding and managing remote employees.

### **Moving Online**

With more people remotely now than ever before. Businesses of all sizes are taking concrete steps to reorganize themselves for new working patterns. Everyone from multinationals such as [BP](#) and

Deutsche Bank, smaller innovators such as Spotify, to tech stalwarts such as Salesforce and Microsoft are announcing new policies that will allow permanent work-from-home or hybrid arrangements.

Here are 5 challenges that HR leaders need to consider as they work to onboard and manage remote employees:

### **1. People and Security Risks**

The rush to remote work means new cybersecurity risks. With many people accessing the internet through a home router, possibly without firewalls and antivirus software, companies must find efficient ways to maintain security around proprietary information. Equally, many businesses had not planned for staff to be working from their kitchen table where family and roommates can see their screens. Managers must set up new policies and procedures to ensure the safety of corporate systems and data for remote working setups.

### **2. Skills and Performance**

The move to hybrid and remote working has changed working cultures and processes. Some managers will be challenged to demonstrate they are adding the same value in the new model. Automated workflows, for example, could make the in-person manager less necessary. Conversely, others will find their skills are now more suited to remote management thrive in





the changed environment. Being open to change and promoting a culture of learning will make employees thrive no matter their position in this new setup.

### 3. Communication

Leaders must learn to navigate the new terrain of remote communication or pay the price. Communicating with people in person is quite different from communicating remotely, and often requires more care and sensitivity. At the same time, video conferencing tools make it easy for employees to assemble virtually and take their leaders to task on working hours, conditions, or management missteps. Especially throughout the onboarding process, companies need to over-communicate and work to create the same sense of culture and welcome that employees would experience in-person.

### 4. Creativity

Several high-profile business leaders have expressed reservations about remote working being viable for all situations: group brainstorming, for example, or deep diving into a thorny or complex strategy issue. This bias is going to set some companies behind, while

those that use this as an opportunity to find new ways to collaborate will see their employees performing higher than they once imagined.

### 5. Compliance

The final part of the puzzle is dealing with the administrative burden that managing this new hybrid and remote workforce brings. Whether companies are seeing a surge in requests for alternative work arrangements as staff ask to change their assumed work location, or hiring employees from another state or country, these requests add complexity to human resources tasks and have tax and risk assessment implications. Assessing and processing these new demands quickly and efficiently requires new technology and tools.

With employees calling the shots, remote working isn't just a nice to have anymore—it's a requirement. While we are still in the relatively early stages of this workplace transformation but as hybrid and work-from-home become the standard way of doing things, getting an automated process for compliance issues is key.

A [study by Upwork](#) found that between 14 and 23 million Americans are planning to move as a result of new work-from-home opportunities. No matter the implications, the future for any successful business involves being able to manage employees from anywhere.



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