

J. Michael Locke

Musings

#191: Musing
September 10, 2022

There is a lot of conversation now about “quiet quitting.” [how-quiet-quitting-became-the-next-phase-of-the-great-resignation](#) This is a misnomer because it does not involve actually quitting but just becoming disengaged and not putting in the extra effort. Some of it is a cultural backlash to the “all in” approach of many in business (like myself.) Gallup estimates that as much as half of the American workforce has disengaged and become quiet quitters. [quiet-quitters-make-up-half-the-u-s-workforce-gallup](#) I would argue that there is a reason Greece is bankrupt and you struggle to identify major innovations and companies in Spain. Life is nicer for employees to work from home and not “go the extra mile” but I worry it will cost our country economically in the long run.

Most companies have implemented a hybrid approach but are struggling with getting vitality back in the office. Is this “middle ground” sustainable? According to Blueprint CEO Matt Riley, “hybrid is the worst of both worlds” as employers try to entice people in. Blueprint went all remote, and while it has plenty of challenges with a dispersed workforce (county employment taxes for example) it has opened up the labor market to the entire country and even Puerto Rico. Key is figuring out how to stay connected with “managerial roadshows” or “popup regional offices.”

Are you good about asking questions? Most people default to talking rather than listening. The best executives are those who ask a lot of questions. *“Questioning is a uniquely powerful tool for unlocking value in organizations: It spurs learning and the exchange of ideas, it fuels innovation and performance improvement, it builds rapport and trust among team members. And it can mitigate business risk by uncovering unforeseen pitfalls and hazards.”* [the-surprising-power-of-questions](#) *“follow-up questions seem to have special power. They signal to your conversation partner that you are listening, care, and want to know more. People interacting with a partner who asks lots of follow-up questions tend to feel respected and heard.”* IMO, intellectual curiosity and grit are the two things to really look for when recruiting.

It is amazing to me what a position in society the company Apple has achieved. The news covers its product rollouts! What a dream of “earned media.” The products aren’t actually new...just newer versions...but it gets covered as societal news. Amazing.

Some interesting comments from Scott Galloway on Labor Day *“We don’t honor workers, we throw loaves of bread at them and give them circuses to distract them from their servitude to capital, which captures more of the spoils each year. Over the past five decades, U.S. GDP*

growth has outpaced wage growth by 63% — in years prior, GDP and wages expanded at the same rate. In 1970 the American middle class received 62% of the country's aggregate income; today it's 42%. The top 1% now owns 32% of our nation's wealth, and the bottom 50% owns 3%. America has never been so disdainful of its workers..” I don't agree with this view but I do believe society must have balance just like the Force in Star Wars and we are getting too much wealth disparity.

Last week I wrote about the connection between hearing loss and dementia. Now, a big study came out on the benefits of walking to reduce dementia risk. *“People between the ages of 40 and 79 who took 9,826 steps per day were 50% less likely to develop dementia within seven years, the study found. Furthermore, people who walked with “purpose” — at a pace over 40 steps a minute — were able to cut their risk of dementia by 57% with just 6,315 steps a day.”* [step-dementia-risk-wellness](#) So put in those hearing aids and go walking!

Watch the use of social media for medical advice — especially for teens. There is a growing trend of young women fighting medical conditions to find questionable communities online called “Spoonies.” Girls can get negatively influenced by these groups worsening their situation. *“The blogger Christine Miserandino, who has lupus, coined the term spoonie in a 2003 [post](#) called “The Spoon Theory.” A spoon, Miserandino explained, equates to a certain amount of energy. The Healthy have unlimited spoons. The Sick—the spoonies—only have a few. They might use one spoon to shower, two to get groceries, and four to go to work. They have to be strategic about how they spend their spoons.”* [hurts-so-good](#) (thanks Heather Locke).

Ever wonder why the speedometer goes up to 160mph in a car that probably can't go 90 and in the US with maximum speed limits of 80mph? From CNN *“Toyota spokesman Paul Hogard said the automaker wants speedometers to be easy to read, so there's value in placing the typical operating speed of American cars, 45 mph to 70 mph, he said, at the top of the speedometer, which is the easiest place on the speedometer for the driver to read. To do this -- while maintaining a visually-appealing, symmetrical speedometer -- requires a gauge that displays well past operating speeds, he said.”* So vehicles, like some Toyota Corollas, have a 160-mph speedometer despite coming nowhere close to reaching such speeds.”

As a society, we seem to be losing our manners. We should not allow rudeness to be normalized nor bad sportsmanship like Kyrgios throwing his rackets at the US open. This is happening at home and in the workplace partially fueled by the loss delineation between them. What you wear and the formality in which you write have drastically changed. Good WSJ article: [what-the-happened-to-our-manners-at-work](#) I am not advocating for the return to suits and ties but let's just bring some common courtesy and niceness back. Don't ghost anybody, hold the door for someone this week, let others out of elevator first, don't curse, give someone a compliment and say thank you. Do it for her majesty, may she rest in peace.

jml