

NEXT CULTURE WORK: **Being in Service of Something Greater Instead of Practicing Work-To-Rule!**

It is astonishing: Most of the people spend the major part of their lives doing a job they don't really like. Day in, day out. Recently, when being asked why he goes to work in the morning, an employee of a company answered: „Why I go to work? Because I have to earn money. Life only starts after finishing time. It is for everyone the same and those who state something different are lying!” Sharp words; yet this statement applies to many people.

In this context many people do not only go to work because they “have to”, but in addition to that many of them practice work-to-rule. Work-to-rule is an inner attitude, which often shows in the atmosphere of a company, the incidence rate and the development of a company.

The definition though of work-to-rule has changed considerably during the last years. While in former times those colleagues were rumored to do work-to-rule, who seemed to be a bit lazier or „dropped the pen“ at a certain time (e. g. at 5 p. m.), this inner attitude has by now reached far bigger dimensions. Work-to-rule does no longer only refer to the working time and lazy attitude. Stricter and stricter specifications of targets and task areas and thus rigid focusing on figures, turnovers, market shares and profit maximization rather lead to the fact that employees try to function, meet the requirements and rules and thus survive in the working environment. Supervisory authorities, who are often defined to control the figures, add up to that. The “lazy” attitude has been replaced by perfectionism and the attempt of having a clean slate. Employees are busy with reaching targets, manage projects in a defined time slot, handle more tasks in shorter time and not make any mistakes. In our fast moving times with increasingly rapid changes and high pressure many employees don't have the ability to do something else than work-to-rule. This results in stress, burnout and other psychosomatic diseases, not to mention the constantly present fear of losing their jobs.

In a huge, worldwide operating IT corporation the profit bandages and target requirements are so tight that employees, who do not reach the required figures over 2 quarters, risk losing their jobs immediately. Consequently, the employees try to do work-to-rule by neither looking to the left, nor to the right, but instead keeping the blinders focused on the figure target, no matter what it costs, even if it costs their health or family lives. That's sad reality in today's business world. The hierarchical, profit focused business world supports the single fighter mode, separation and competition.

If you did a survey asking employees of different companies whether they would say that they truly have a fulfilling job, you will get an alarming result. Only few employees can confirm from their hearts that their job is fulfilling.

Work-to-rule also includes the fact that employees are generally only allowed to do the tasks defined in their job description. Whether these match their talents or inspire them is not relevant. If an employee has applied for a certain job the scope is clear. They can hardly move further than that, because otherwise they would act outside of their defined field of competence, which is not

wanted. Just by dry job descriptions employees are thus kept small and put into a job or title drawer.

The job is oftentimes regarded as necessary evil, which might be bearable due to nice colleagues sharing the office. Yet, the monthly salary is oftentimes considered to be „compensation for pain and suffering“ for the wasted life time and the continuous stress. The main motivation for effecting performance is based on control and monetary or material compensation in the form of salary, company car, bonuses, company shares, extra vacation or other social benefits. The assumed job security becomes a prison.

It is therefore not surprising that employees are exploited, tired, dull and exhausted at the end of the day and leave the office with the thought „Finally finishing time. Let’s get out of here.“ Many have adopted the habit to then have a beer or glass of wine at home for relaxation. However, the unconscious purpose of this pretended relaxation is to keep the numbness bar as high as possible through alcohol to not feel the state of exhaustion of the body and possible, upcoming feelings.

In addition to that a misleading understanding about resilience supports the numbness bar. Employees are demanded to have perseverance, be able to work under pressure and be stress resistant in order to meet all requirements and rules. The misunderstanding might be based on the repeated slogans employees hear, saying that their personal needs don’t count, that figures have top priority and that the employees therefore have to cope with the pressure if they want to keep their jobs. Feelings are undesired (just take into consideration that the general opinion about feelings in our society is the following: *Anger* is destructive, irrational, impolite, uncontrolled, dangerous, chaotic and immature. *Sadness* is weak, emotional, unprofessional, negative, ruins the day of others, discourages, is too weak and not wanted. *Fear* is instable, irrational, paralyzing, powerless, incompetent and cowardly. Too much *joy* is unrealistic, childish, silly, not to be taken seriously, naive, not logical). Thus many people endure the drudgery and try to practice work-to-rule without actually having developed a stable inner resilience, which is based on authentic and archetypal, i. e. original feelings power.

Exactly these feelings could serve as valuable rocket fuel for change, making a person resilient and this not at the expense of health. Only when you learn to consciously own the four big feelings territories (anger, joy, sadness, fear) and learn about the underlying neutral energy and information you can use the feelings as indicators for necessary change. Yet, so far most of the employees hope for the next vacation. Recently a woman mentioned that she is thinking from one vacation to the next, because this is the only time she can look forward to. Between the vacations she just tries to function and meet the expectations of the management resp. her boss and thus do work-to-rule. It is alarming that many employees also consider it to be normal that they get sick at the beginning of a holiday – just as soon as the body is no longer under pressure and is „allowed“ to break down. What kind of “sick“ normality is this? How far have we gone in the business world? And who has fallen by the wayside? The people and the Earth. This procedure unconsciously serves so called irresponsible shadow principles, such as e. g. destruction, competition, envy, greed, revenge, distrust, arrogance, ignorance, misuse of power etc. This does not only show in the overall focus of a company, but in the end in each meeting and each single person.

A completely different kind of working environment would be possible, if the values and the context in companies would be transformed through a change of the inner attitude of each individual. In contrast to “work-to-rule” the new direction could be “being in service of something greater”. What does this specifically mean?

To be in service of something greater means to serve so called bright principle which have a different, i. e. responsible and conscious purpose and serve human beings and the Earth, such as e. g. clarity, being with, evolution, sustainability, community, creativity, appreciation, attention, authenticity, communication, integrity, commitment, discipline, respect, openness, transparency, fairness, possibility, service, empowerment etc.

Serving responsible, bright principles means to focus on sustainability and to work for the people and the Earth. The focus on profit gives way to sustainability. In this context sustainability does not only mean ecologically sustainable, but ecologically, economically and socially sustainable. Sustainability starts with human relations, because the way we treat each other is the way we treat the Earth. Awareness and responsibility starts with each single person.

To be in service of something greater in the job would mean to e. g. work for the vision of a fulfilling and meaningful working world in which people can bring in their personal talents and are regarded as unique individuals that have to give something. If employees can give their talents for a bigger, sustainable vision instead of being measured by a figure based job description, they are empowered. Then – instead of a salary - inspiration and enthusiasm are the motivation for their acting and being. Life does no longer start after work but actually happens all day long. A very interesting difference is that you are still full of energy at the end of the day.

To be in service of something greater includes that you own your feelings again and use them responsibly. You

- use the power of your *conscious anger* to e. g. set clear boundaries, give clarity, make sustainable decisions, say yes or no, take action and stay centered instead of behaving adaptive,
- use your *conscious fear* to e. g. enter new territory, try new things, be innovative and creative, make plans, be precise, ask dangerous questions, improvise, be awake and present,
- use your *conscious sadness* to e. g. be authentically vulnerable, human, caring, create sincere contact and let go of old things,
- use your *conscious joy* to e. g. motivate, lead, go first, dance through challenges, be light and appreciate others without reason.

Owning your feelings allows you to have access to an incredibly valuable inner navigation system again that leads you unerringly through life and the working world, allowing you to set boundaries and act responsibly and sustainably. That’s in the end what stable, inner resilience is based on.

When employees of a company are in service of something greater then teamwork and community have priority. It is about working together for evolution, for a joint vision, creating possibilities and working on projects that inspire each individual. Then life does not only happen after finishing time,



but you live instead while working. Even more than that: you actually don't perceive work as work anymore but as an inspiring time in service for something greater.

One or the other might say now that this is all wishful thinking. In the end it is up to every person. It is up to you to decide for what or whom you would like to work and spend most of your lifetime. Do you want to work for a company exploiting nature and people?

The quoted employee from the beginning of this article asked me at the end of the meeting: "So why do you get up in the morning?" I looked at him quietly. It was not a question out of curiosity. It was a true question coming from his heart that was longing to leave the illusion of money security. So I answered authentically vulnerable: „I don't get up, because I have to earn money or want to become rich. Money is not my top priority. I get up, because I decided to put myself into service of something greater. The Earth is just about to collapse. We use up the resources of two planets although there is just one available. I love the Earth and I love the human beings and it is dare to my heart that both exist together in harmony. My vision is to create a new culture in which people treat each other and the Earth consciously and respectfully and in which companies act radically responsibly and sustainably. This is the vision I am living for. This is my inspiration and my vocation. This is why I get up every morning." The room went silent. You could sense that the innermost parts of the people sitting there were also longing for something else than the usual, stressful business world and the work-to-rule. And exactly in this authentic moment a very special connection happened between us.

Why do you get up in the morning? What is your vision? What are you longing for?

In the following you find again a table with the main differences between „work-to-rule“ and „being in service of something greater“.

Work-to-rule	Being in service of something greater
For profit maximization	For the Earth
For the biggest market share	For the people
Focus on increase of turnover	Focus on sustainability (between people as well as with regard to the resources of the Earth)
Tasks according to job descriptions and alleged professional competences. Talents are not considered to be relevant.	Use of personal talents and preferences.
Motivation through monetary and material compensation (salary, company car, other social benefits)	Motivation through inspiration, vision, enthusiasm
Meet requirements, rules and targets	Create possibilities
Life starts after finishing time	Life happens while working and being

The job is a duty and necessary evil	The job bears possibilities for development
The focus is on getting the tasks done	The focus is on evolution
Salary is regarded as compensation for pain and suffering	Salary is secondary
Supports the single fighter mode	Supports true teamwork and solidarity
The question about the sense of work is not asked	The goal is to act meaningfully
Work is a prison	Work is fulfillment
Unconscious focus on survival	Conscious focus on living
Resilience = enduring stress in the sense of keeping the numbness bar high	Resilience = stability through owning your feelings and using their neutral energy and information as indicator for change
The job is connected with security	Consciousness about the fact that security is an illusion
Employees are only allowed to act in their defined scope of tasks	Employees can work on different topics and in different departments, depending on where their talents and competences are wanted and needed.
Employees serve unconsciously so called shadow principles	Employees put themselves into service of bright principles
At the end of the day the main thought is: "Finally end of work. Let's get out of here."	At the end of the day the main thought is: „Oh, already evening? The project is so inspiring, I can't stop."
At the end of the day employees are exploited, tired, dull, exhausted and have to recover	At the end of the day employees are still full of energy and inspiration
Vacation is regarded as life raft and is absolutely necessary to recover from the pressure and stress at work	Vacation? It is a nice change, but no longer necessary for recharging the batteries

(Author: Nicola Nagel)

Hint:

You find more about "being in service of something greater" and many more aspects with regard to new organizational structures and ways of working in the book „Edgeworker: Beyond Leadership – It is Time for the Management-(R)Evolution!“ from Nicola Nagel and Patrizia Servidio.

You find more about the topic "resilience" in the sense of taking authentic possession of feelings in the book „The power of conscious feelings“ from Clinton Callahan.