

# HUMAN WORK

**We Inherited a Number Nobody Chose.**

twicethegood.com

with Jessie Heath

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*A practical guide for leaders ready to redesign work — not just rearrange it.*

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## LEADER'S CHECKLIST

### **Audit how you measure contribution.**

If your primary metric is hours logged, you are measuring attendance. Shift conversations to outcomes — what was delivered, what quality, what impact.

### **Acknowledge the invisible second shift.**

Most employees carry domestic and caregiving responsibilities that exist outside work hours but directly shape capacity. Acknowledge this openly rather than treating it as a personal variable.

### **Examine what your structure was designed for.**

The 40-hour model assumed one earner and one person managing everything else. That household is no longer the norm. Ask whether your expectations reflect the workforce you actually have.

### **Protect recovery as a performance strategy.**

Cognitive performance degrades after three to five productive hours. Build in recovery rather than filling hours. Sustained output requires sustainable conditions.

### **Stop rewarding time present over value created.**

Recognize and promote based on contribution, creativity, and outcome — not visibility and hours logged. What gets rewarded teaches people what is actually valued.

### **Make flexibility available by design, not exception.**

If flexibility exists only for some roles or salary bands, it is a perk — not a culture. Explore what flexibility can look like for every function, even when the shape differs.

## CRAFT GUARDRAILS

### **Do not frame exhaustion as dedication.**

When high performers are stretched thin but still delivering, it is easy to mistake overextension for commitment. The cost is rarely visible until it becomes departure.

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## CRAFT GUARDRAILS (CONTINUED)

### **Avoid flexibility theater.**

Announcing that work-life balance matters while preserving every structural norm teaches employees that the language changed but the design did not. Behavior is the message.

### **Resist solving design problems with resilience programs.**

Wellness benefits and mental health resources have limited impact when workload and structure remain unchanged. Sustainable performance begins with job design.

### **Do not penalize honesty about capacity.**

When employees name limits, that is data — not weakness. Organizations that punish this signal train people to mask problems until they become crises.

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

### **If you were designing work from scratch today — for two-income households and what we know about human performance — would you design this?**

Sit with that question before your next conversation about productivity or attendance.

### **Where in your organization are people solving a structural problem with personal sacrifice?**

Name one place where design — not individual effort — is the appropriate response.

### **Who on your team is carrying work that does not appear in any job description?**

Invisible labor shapes capacity and trust. Making it visible is the first step to redistributing it fairly.

## SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Harvard Business Review — The Case for the 6-Hour Workday
- ILO — Working Time and Workers' Preferences in Industrialized Countries
- Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2024
- APA Work in America 2024 Survey
- McKinsey — Women in the Workplace 2024 — The Second Shift
- MIT Sloan Management Review — Work Design and Sustainable Performance
- Stanford — Cognitive Performance and Peak Productive Hours Research