

Genius File #1 – The Knowledge Worker's Manifesto

By

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The Problem

Today – too many people are frustrated and want more out of their careers. They are tired of struggling to reach the next level of performance in their jobs:

A recent Harris Interactive poll of 7,718 workers revealed that:

- 42% felt burned out
- 33% felt dead-ended
- 85% did not feel strongly energized by their work, and

A survey by The Conference Board shows that satisfaction levels among all workers have deteriorated over the last 20 years. Less than 45% feel fulfilled by what they are doing today.

A recent Franklin Covey poll of 23,000 workers showed that:

- 80% were unenthusiastic about their goals, and
- 50% were dissatisfied with their work at the end of the week

Need I continue? Is this the best we can do? Do you find you use phrases like...

- Monday morning blues
- Hump day
- TGIF
- Mental health days

Do we sound like we're actually having fun? How satisfied and passionate are you really about your work and results? If you aren't, well you are definitely not alone. There is an epidemic of people who are frustrated, dissatisfied, unfulfilled, and not passionate about their work ~ that is the Problem.

What exactly is causing this epidemic? Business has changed. We used to live in an industrial age that ran on physical capital (e.g., raw materials, machinery). Now we live in an intellectual age that runs on intellectual capital (e.g., knowledge, brand recognition, service).

A worker's greatest value used to be for the manual ability to "do" (i.e., the manual worker). Today a worker's greatest value comes from a mental ability to "think" (i.e., the **knowledge worker**).

Unfortunately, many of today's beliefs about how to manage people - and how you should manage yourself - are legacy beliefs created in the industrial age. They have been passed down and learned from your manager, who learned them from her manager, who learned from his manager, and so on.

These legacy beliefs are what drive the statistics regarding job dissatisfaction. While your value has changed, in many ways you continue to be valued - by management and yourself - as the manual worker of old was valued.

What we have today are outdated, misplaced, and ineffective beliefs and concepts from a bygone era. What we need are contemporary beliefs that are designed for today's knowledge worker, not the manual worker.

Contemporary research shows us exactly how those beliefs need to change. The trick is, however, that it is your individual beliefs that must also change if you are to avoid becoming just another dissatisfied, unhappy, and underperforming statistic.

It's time for a revolution in how today's knowledge worker is valued, and how you value yourself. To do that it is your self-beliefs must first change. It's time for a private revolution where you break with conventional thinking and *revolutionize* your own mind.

The Great Shift

It's not our father's business world anymore. Increased competition, decreased barriers to entrance, a growing world market and the changing relationship between organizations and their employees; all make today's business landscape radically different from what it was only a generation or two ago.

At the heart of this change is the fact that the world of business has transitioned from an industrial era to an intellectual one. The competitive advantages of old are no longer much of an advantage. More often than not what makes one company better than another is not its production facilities, the number of machines it owns, or its access to

raw materials. What separates today's business winners from losers is the intellectual capital contained between the ears of a business's most valued asset – YOU, the knowledge worker.

What is a Knowledge Worker anyway? A knowledge worker is a person who generates value by using knowledge to deliver results, as opposed to a manual worker who uses machinery to produce things. Of course the title includes the more obvious fields of knowledge like information technology, computer programming, and science, but you might be surprised at what other kinds of roles are more knowledge-based today (e.g., management, sales, customer service). Knowledge Workers are now estimated to outnumber all other workers in North America at least a four to one (Haag et al., 2006, pg. 4).

Check out the list of roles on "www.whatsyourgenius.com" to see if you are a knowledge worker. You might just be surprised.

- The fact that Knowledge workers far outnumber manual workers today is NOT an argument.
- 70% of the world's GDP is now generated through providing services rather than manufacturing goods
- Eight out of ten employees now provide support and services
- Companies that manage knowledge workers better have market values ranging from \$16,000 to \$40,000 per employee higher
- Over the past 11 years, companies that rank highest on their ability to manage knowledge workers have financially outperformed the S&P 500 by 50% each year.

Legacy Beliefs

Even though today more people than ever are knowledge workers, most of the beliefs about how to manage people are legacy beliefs that don't fit with this new reality. The most pervasive of these leftover beliefs - the one that single-handedly does more damage to the individual worker than any other - is the belief that companies have to own, manage, and control people just like they owned and controlled machines in the industrial era.

The conventional wisdom of the industrial age was that the company decided who did what and how, and management was supposed to dictate the "one best way" to accomplish any task. This view was mostly due to the theory of *Scientific Management*, which became the "holy bible" on the *one best way* to manage people for optimal efficiency in an industrial age.

The only problem was that the management principles of Scientific Management viewed the manual worker as a flawed element in the industrial process that had to be *controlled*. This control had a terribly dehumanizing effect on the world's workforce and

became the impetus for the eventual reduction of the worker to nothing more than a piece of equipment to be used and controlled.

Here are two examples that illustrate the controlling and limiting view of the individual from the philosophy of Scientific Management:

- “You do it my way, by my standards, at the speed I mandate, and in so doing achieve a level of output I ordain. All you have to do is take orders and give up your way of doing the job for mine.”
- “Each man must give up his own particular way of doing things, adapt his methods to the many new standards, and grow accustomed to receiving and obeying instructions covering details large and small, which in the past had been left to individual judgment. The workmen are to do as they are told.”

Whether we understand the connection or not, we've inherited a significant legacy of beliefs that continues to drive management practices that undervalue individuality *and* cause people to give up their own best way in favor of the company's one best way.

I know what you are saying right about now. “Yeah, but that was a long time ago. Business today is nothing like that.” If you think we actually left all those beliefs in the past, consider the following examples of how an industrial view of people still survives in the DNA of most organizations.

- Most companies still employ industrial era executive structures. We usually find a Chief Executive Officer, a Chief Financial Officer and even a Chief Operations Officer. But how many companies have a Chief People Officer?
- Most companies today still practice industrial era finance – where material purchases are recorded as an investment on the P&L sheet, and payroll goes in the *expense* column.
- Most companies still do a better job of managing processes and materials than they do people (most product defect rates are much lower than human turnover rates).
- Outside of payroll, only 0.6% of corporate revenue is spent on Human Resource initiatives.

The problem then is that the very field of management is so founded in an industrial mentality during which it was born that we take these basic beliefs for granted without questioning them. The result is a legacy of belief that is so foundational and such a basic part of how we think that it goes unnoticed and unchallenged.

The danger with legacies of any kind is that they often continue to exist simply because they have always existed. They do not remain in place because of their own merit, but rather by default.

The Implications

There are multiple problems associated with such legacy beliefs, but one of the biggest is the old Command and Control mentality. This view defines the role as *sacrosanct* and the worker as *sacrificial*. By this I mean the “one best way” where the individual is instructed to sacrifice his or her way of doing things in favor of the company’s way.

When the primary value of the worker was for his or her manual ability to “do”, expecting everyone to conform to a standard way of *doing* something may have worked. That’s because it is possible for people to modify how they manually perform a task. Since the primary value of today’s worker is intellectual, though, expecting everyone to conform to a standard way of *thinking* doesn’t work at all, because it is not possible for people to change their natural thinking and decision-making styles.

Today *you* must be sacrosanct and role is sacrificial. To succeed today, you must give up on following someone else’s one best way and find your own best way – one that is true to your own natural talents for thinking.

The Solution

It’s time for a revolution in how you view yourself and your roles. This revolution does not involve overthrowing corporate leadership. It does not involve your trying to change anything - other than how you view yourself and how you get results.

The revolution I’m talking about is a *private revolution*, one where you radically change the way you value yourself. It’s a revolution in your mind for how you approach your role and how you go about getting results.

How To Start Your Very Own Private Revolution

How does you create your own a private revolution? Simply put, learn from those who are already doing it successfully. There *are* individuals who have broken with the conventional ways. There are those who refuse to manage themselves using outdated beliefs. And these individuals can show you how they created their own private revolution, and how they found deep fulfillment, satisfaction, passion and success in what they do every day. They can show you how to start your very own private revolution just as they did once.

Left or Right?

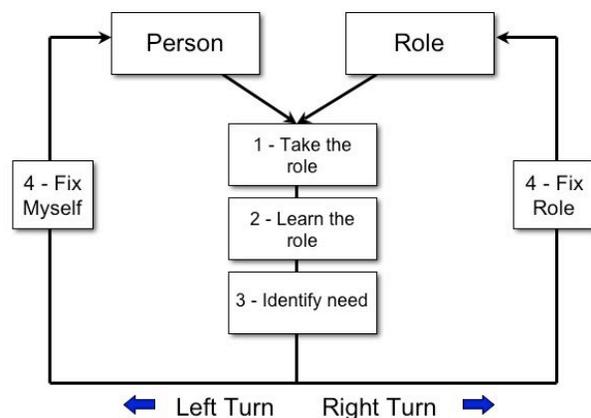
What exactly do these modern-day knowledge workers do to achieve significant success? The results of a recent 7-year, 197,000-person, 23-country study give us some of the answer. Simply put, the most successful people in the new economy recognize three core facts about themselves:

- Their value to the organization has shifted from their physical ability to *do*, to their mental ability to *think*.
- While they can change how they manually do things, they cannot change their natural thinking and decision-making styles.
- Instead of fixing themselves to conform to the one best way, they make the role conform to their own best way.

The simple concept below illustrates how the most successful people in today's economy think very differently about themselves and their path.

There are four universal steps that everyone goes through in any role:

- Step 1 – Accept the role.
- Step 2 – Get to know the role better and determine what that role really requires for success.
- Step 3 – Inevitably, identify gaps between what the role requires and what you can provide (talents, knowledge, skills, etc.).
- Step 4 – Attempt to close those gaps (either by changing yourself, or changing the role).



Step #4 is the crucial difference. It is where the difference between old and new beliefs lies. The old belief is that the role is fixed and to improve requires turning left to focus on fixing oneself (i.e. change your natural thinking style).

Today's successful revolutionists, however, do the exact opposite. They don't assume they need to change themselves to better fit the role they have. Instead they turn right and focus on fixing the role to better fit them instead.

Will you turn left to try and modify yourself – or will you turn right to modify the role?

- Marshall Goldsmith, a famous executive coach and revolutionist, provides a great example of turning right, when he says, "I constantly try to refine the strengths I have, but that doesn't mean I try to develop things I don't already have. The key is to have your role depend primarily on what you already naturally do well."
- Famed management guru, Peter Drucker, used to counsel leaders to help their people turn right when he said, "Make your people's weaknesses irrelevant." He didn't say fix the person; he said change the role so the weakness doesn't matter because it isn't required.

- Golf legend, Tiger Woods, has a weak sand game, but instead of spending tons of energy trying to fix himself by improving his sand game, he turned right and focuses on his strength as a driver – thus, he doesn't land in the sand in the first place, making that weakness irrelevant.

Get the point? So, the question to you is:

Do you want to spend your life trying to fix your weaknesses and fitting their *one best way* – or would you rather do it your way, authentically, in your *own best way*, with passion, satisfaction, happiness and results that surprise you?

If you choose the latter route, it won't happen by waiting for management to do it for you. Like all revolutions, this one must also take place in your mind and heart first. YOU have to create your own private revolution – because no one else is going to do it for you!

The next step in creating that private revolution is to get the guide that will show you exactly how the most successful revolutionists have done it. It is a book called *What's Your Genius – How The Best Think For Success In The New Economy*, and it will give you everything you need to learn how to start turning right so you can become more self-aware, authentic, satisfied and successful.

Some of the successful revolutionists you'll learn from in this book:

- Anthony Robbins – Personal Life Coach and Peak Performance expert
- Dan Lyons – CEO of Team Concepts Inc., 7-time National Team member, World Champion and Olympian in rowing
- Frances Hesselbein – Founding Director of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation and former CEO of the Girl Scouts of America
- Laurence Higgins M.D. – Chief of Sports and Shoulder surgery at Harvard
- Dr. Marshall Goldsmith – *NY Times*' best-selling business author and executive coach to Fortune 500 CEOs
- Michael Lorelli – former Chief Marketing Officer and President of PepsiCo International
- Mickey Rogers – World Authority Demolitions Expert
- Randy Haykin – Founding Vice President Sales/Marketing Yahoo Inc.
- And many others...

The Genius Files is a series of educational articles crafted from lessons learned in the recently concluded Genius Project (a seven-year, 197,000, twenty-three country study of what drives individual excellence in the new knowledge worker economy).

The Genius Project is the foundational research behind the latest book from Innermetrix Inc Founder and CEO Jay Niblick titled, *What's Your Genius – How the Best Think for Success*.

To view the entire Genius series, or to learn more about Mr. Niblick, please visit <http://www.whatsyourgenius.com>.