

Eat Sleep Work Repeat

**30 HACKS FOR BRINGING
JOY TO YOUR JOB**

BRUCE DAISLEY

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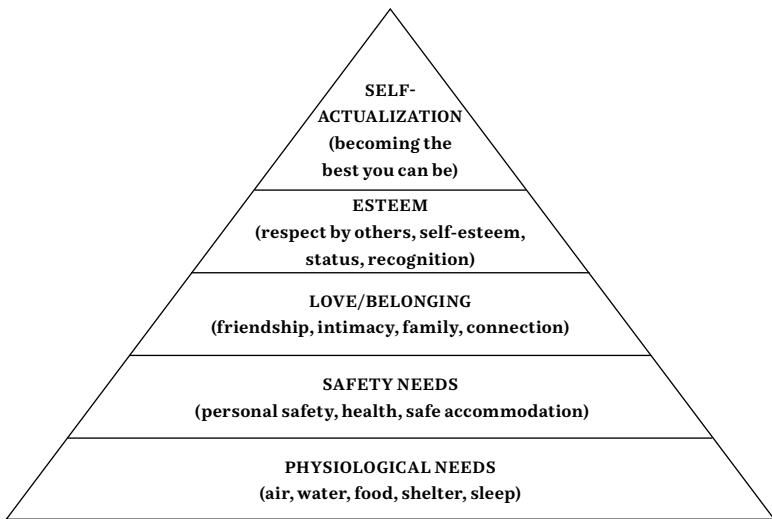
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The evidence in favor of open plan is singularly lacking. People in open offices take significantly more sick days than those who work in offices where only a handful of colleagues (fewer than six) are nearby.¹⁰ When they *are* at work, according to one report, constant distractions mean that the average worker is being interrupted every three minutes: by colleagues with quick questions, by overheard fragments of conversation, not to mention all the other distractions of modern office life.¹¹ Given that experts argue that it can take up to eight minutes to get back into a concentrated state again after an interruption, the amount of time wasted is considerable (others have even suggested that the time to get back fully into deep concentration could be as much as twenty minutes).¹² The fact is that humans are not good at attention switching. One study of software engineers suggested that among engineers who were working on five projects concurrently, 75 percent of their time was lost to switching mentally between them—leaving only 5 percent work attention per project.¹³

Number of Simultaneous Projects	Loss to Context Switching	Time Subsequently Available per Project
1	0%	100%
2	20%	40%
3	40%	20%
4	60%	10%
5	75%	5%

According to Maslow, the most essential elements of human existence are such physiological requirements as air, water, food, shelter, and sleep. Then, following personal safety, come love and belonging, followed by esteem (for ourselves and by others) and, finally, the overarching, most elevated need—the need for self-actualization.

It's a compelling model and is almost universally acclaimed and accepted as a robust guide to human motivation. But it's almost certainly wrong. Think about the babies at Frederick II's court. The Maslow model clearly doesn't explain why infants who were



fed and looked after would perish simply because they were deprived of love and affection.

The findings of renowned Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman are arguably even bleaker. He and a team of collaborators wanted to get a handle on those times when we feel the greatest satisfaction in our lives, so they set out to measure the good and bad moods (positive and negative affect) volunteers felt at different moments of the day and to discover what caused these shifting feelings.³ Not surprisingly, they found that there was a gulf between the enjoyment people felt while commuting (3.45 out of a possible maximum 6) and the enjoyment they experienced when relaxing with friends (4.59)—a 1.14-point differential on their scale. When it came to the workplace, pressure or tiredness could easily shift happiness down a point on the scale (in fact, tiredness could bring even the single most enjoyable experience, “intimate relations”—in other words, sex—down from a 5.1 to a score lower than the 3.1 recorded for people who were on their daily commute but who felt well rested).

	Positive Affect Rating (Out of 6)	When Under Time Pressure (Out of 6)	When Tired (Out of 6)
Intimate relations	5.10	0.74	3.09
Socializing	4.59	1.20	2.33
Eating	4.34	0.95	2.55
Watching TV	4.19	1.02	3.54
Preparing food	3.93	1.54	3.11
Taking care of children	3.86	1.95	3.56
Working	3.62	2.70	2.42
Commuting	3.45	2.60	2.75
Interacting with friends	4.36	1.61	2.59
Interacting with spouse	4.11	1.53	3.46
Interacting with boss	3.52	2.82	2.44

<i>Psychological Safety</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Negative or Neutral Affect</i>	<i>Positive Affect</i>
		<p>GRIND</p> <p>A rare condition. Characterized by straight talk but lacking in warmth, it's found in workplaces that believe in the power of radical transparency but not in an accompanying warmth. Grind can also be found in situations in which safety checklists and procedures take a very high priority (e.g., aviation). Work environments that are in the Grind state are candid but clinical.</p>	<p>BUZZ</p> <p>A combination of honest dialogue grounded in trust and sustained motivating positivity. Buzz is found in creative environments in which candor and high output go hand in hand.</p>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Negative or Neutral Affect</i>	<i>Positive Affect</i>
		<p>SURVIVAL</p> <p>A very common workplace condition. "Keep your head down and get on with your work." Survival involves putting in the hours (or at least being seen to put in the hours) and hoping to avoid exposure to risky projects.</p>	<p>ISOLATION</p> <p>A workplace culture in which people feel that they will be rewarded if they achieve great things individually, but there's little sense of teamwork. Such a culture is often highly political and engenders a sense of job insecurity. Workplaces that carry out "stack ranking" of employees' performance but that also provide good benefits can find themselves creating this sense of isolation.</p>

Most of us have found ourselves in that classic situation where it seems easier just to do the job ourselves than to take the time to explain it to someone else. But Sutherland’s argument in favor of small teams is more fundamental than that. The problem with adding a person to a team, he argues, is that it multiplies the lines of communication. There’s even a formula for it. Sutherland says, “If you want to calculate the impact of group size, you take the number of people on a team, multiply by ‘that number minus one,’ and divide by two”—in other words, communication channels = $n(n - 1)/2$. Or, put more simply:

Team Size	Communication Channels
5 people	10
6 people	15
7 people	21
8 people	28
9 people	36
10 people	45

One way in which the social sensitivity of individuals was assessed during the experiment was via a test originally created to screen people for autism. Those on the autism spectrum usually find it difficult to read facial cues that reveal what others are feeling. The clinical psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen therefore devised the “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test, which involves showing people three dozen photographs of people featured in magazines in the 1990s and asking them to try to assess the emotional state of each subject. It’s a test you can try yourself in full online, or in part with the couple of examples I’ve included below. In each case, choose one word from the four next to the image that you think best describes the emotion being expressed. For the correct answers, see the endnote.⁴

Figure 1



Figure 2



4. Figure 1: happy (photo credit: Hian Oliveira/Unsplash). Figure 2: angry (photo credit: www.pexels.com). Anyone can take the test online; give yourself a full ten minutes to complete it. <https://socialintelligence.labinthewild.org/mite/>

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TED Talks and Videos

Sometimes a video can be a better conversation starter with your team than a book. Here are nine videos that can start a discussion about each of the themes shown.

How empty space is what leads to creative ideas

How Boredom Can Lead to Your Most Brilliant Ideas—Manoush Zomorodi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c73Q8oQmwzo>

Changing meetings

Want to Be More Creative? Go for a Walk—Marilyn Oppezzo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4LSwZ05laQ>

Belonging and friendship at work

All You Need Is Love . . . at Work?—Sigal Barsade
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKNTyGW3o7E>

Reducing our dependency on our phones

Being Online All the Time—Leslie Perlow, author of *Sleeping with Your Smartphone*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVYEtSFW6UA>

The power of chat in the office

Social Physics: How Good Ideas Spread—Alex “Sandy” Pentland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMBI0ttu-Ow>

More about chat in the office

Using Analytics to Measure Interactions in the Workplace—Ben Waber

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XojhyhoRI7I&t=2s>

Why you should ban phones in meetings

How to Build (and Rebuild) Trust—Frances Frei

https://www.ted.com/talks/frances_frei_how_to_build_and_rebuild_trust/

The Marshmallow Challenge (don’t watch this one before you try it)

Build a Tower, Build a Team—Tom Wujec

https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_wujec_build_a_tower#t-45675

Changing the dynamics of safety in your team

Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace—Amy Edmondson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLui9gX8>