



How to Shift from The Great Resignation to The Great Retention.

“We don’t know who discovered water, but it wasn’t a fish.”

Marshall McLuhan

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FORTUNE Magazine says the Great Resignation has stunned many business owners and employers. Today nearly two-thirds of U.S. workers are looking to change jobs or leave the workforce altogether.

“Researchers have revealed turnover patterns that explain why so many are quitting in droves right now. Employers looking to stop the exodus should pay attention: Much of the onus is on them to give workers better reasons to stay. Research has shown that people tend to quit their jobs after experiencing a turnover shock: a life event that precipitates self-reflection about one’s job satisfaction. Shocks can be positive, like grad school acceptance or a new baby, or negative, like a divorce or sick relative. Or they can be global catastrophes like COVID-19 that upend every aspect of daily life.”

This phenomenon is exactly what I explored in my latest book, *Is That All There Is?* I spent three years interviewing people who had successfully pivoted their careers and their lives to understand exactly why, how, what, and when they changed their lives. I believe their stories will show you how you and your company can benefit from this seemingly overwhelming new reality and move from uncertainty to clarity.

Here are a few things you need to know right now:

1. Why workers are leaving their jobs in record numbers.
2. What actions employers can take to stop the exodus and retain their people right now.
3. How to replace a “change management” mindset with a “growth management” mindset.
4. How purpose drives retention in the new world of work.
5. Proven ways to move from uncertainty to clarity in your business and your life.

Why is The Great Resignation Happening Now?

There are a number of reasons why people are looking to change their lives.

When they’re talking about the reasons why people sell their homes real estate professionals list the Seven Ds:

Divorce	Downsizing
Disease	Disability
Disaster	Debt, and
Death.	



More people in the world today own Internet-enabled devices than own toothbrushes.

Other than the blessings of a larger family or greater income, the Seven Ds are the main reasons people sell their homes and look for new places to live.

They can also be the reasons why people finally decide to ditch their careers or their lifestyles and move on, especially if you add two more Ds:

**Dissatisfaction, and
Disappointment.**



The Age of Accelerated Change.

Besides these points, there are three specific technological situations that have drastically changed the way the world works and the way we look at our lives. They are:

1. The Democratization of Information
2. Globalization, and
3. Computerization.

These three factors, combined with the enormous demographic changes we've experienced, and the catalytic mechanism of the COVID-19 pandemic have created social upheaval like we haven't seen in almost a century.

The Democratization of Information

Think of the development of human society using the "Age" markers that historians have used for hundreds of years. When we humans lived as cave dwellers on the great savannah, we were in The Stone Age. We then progressed technologically through The Iron Age, and The Bronze Age. This continued

through The Dark Age, The Feudal Age, The Age of Enlightenment, and on through The Agricultural Age, The Industrial Age, and The Information Age. Each time mankind progressed technologically, new methods of living and interrelating replaced the old, and we underwent cataclysmic change.

One of the most significant changes of the Information Age was that information and data replaced material assets (land, machines, hard inventories, etc.) as the basis for both wealth and the creation of wealth. Land barons and titans of industry, the former titles of the most successful and powerful business leaders, gave way to hedge fund managers and infopreneurs sitting on the top of the heap. And in this new reality, controlling data was seen as the most important way to safeguard wealth.

But thanks to ubiquitous Internet access, information is now open and free. And while old wisdom insisted that "knowledge is power" today's mantra is "applied knowledge is power."

This is because information is available to virtually anyone with a smartphone and an Internet connection. After all, Siri, Alexa, Cortana, Google, and their friends know everything. And they're happy to share that knowledge with you, your competition, AND your employees.

If knowledge workers can find the information they need anywhere, why should they stay chained to a desk? If your company isn't providing the reason, then they will leave.

Globalization

It used to be that if you were at the top of your game in any specific area, you could make a good living. Customers were only willing to travel so far for goods and services and positioning yourself conveniently close to them was a viable strategy.

But today, globalization has seen to it that we can find anything, anywhere, anytime, and at virtually any price.

And so, the allure of a stable location has become less and less interesting and less and less critical to earning a living.

At the same time, it's become less and less necessary to stay put in order to excel in one's chosen field.

When networking is done online, using LinkedIn and Zoom, who needs to stay in town and attend endless Chamber of Commerce meetings? When clients can easily be serviced with email, WhatsApp, and Dropbox, who needs to meet in person? And when product delivery can be facilitated on a next day basis with FedEx and UPS or same day with Uber Eats, Door Dash, and Grub Hub deliveries, who needs to be nearby?

The answer is the same for all three questions – nobody.

Computerization

It should be clear by now that the two new phenomena illustrated above, The Democratization of Information and Globalization, are possible because of the ubiquitous mega trend called Computerization. Back in 2011, the author of *Physics of the Future*, Michio Kaku, wrote: "Today, your cell phone has more computer power than all of NASA back in 1969, when it sent two astronauts to the moon."

David Brock, director of the Computer History Museum's software history center, says that Apollo's computer "eventually required about 145,000 lines of code in all, compared with about 62 million lines of code required today to operate Facebook and more than two billion lines of code for Google."

Think about it – you carry more computer power in your back pocket than was used to put mankind on the moon for the first time. Doesn't that suggest that things have changed pretty dramatically?

COVID 19

People tend to think that The Great Resignation was caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, but that's not actually true.

“We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some of us are on super-yachts. Some of us have just the one oar.”

The movement of people away from their jobs and careers was already happening, thanks to the occurrences listed above, as well as changing demographics and generational wealth. The pandemic did not cause the movement – it simply focused and exacerbated it.

In other words, the COVID 19 pandemic was the catalytic mechanism that caused virtually the entire world population to stop, take stock of their lives, and wonder what they were going to do next. *Is That All There Is?* became the international zeitgeist because everyone was forced to reevaluate their lives at the exact same moment in time. And when they did, the effects of The Democratization of Information, Globalization, and Computerization, made lots of new opportunities possible.

During the early days of the pandemic, when we were first coming to grips with everything coming to a grinding halt, the popular belief was that “we are all in the same boat.” But as *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out, “We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some of us are on super-yachts. Some of us have just the one oar.”

COVID 19 was not the cause of The Great Resignation. It was the Catalytic Mechanism that made it happen now.

**Instead, the change in employee
satisfaction was caused by four
unprecedented phenomena:**

- 1. The Democratization of Information,**
- 2. Globalization,**
- 3. Computerization,**
- 4. Generational & Demographic Shifts.**

I learned about the differences in outlook and opportunity when I flew across the country right before the pandemic shut down air travel.

The two guys sitting next to me on the plane were chattering away like old friends. Thanks to FAA regulations, I couldn't open up my laptop until we "reached a comfortable cruising altitude of 10,000 feet" so even though I really didn't want to listen to them, I was stuck.

Turns out the first guy was creating new video technology application and

the second guy had been in the video rental and installation business for 30 years, so they had a lot to talk about. Basically, their conversational ping-pong went something like this:

Guy One: "We're going to readjust the framitz on the whosie-whatser which will double our resolution. That will allow the gesungie to process twice as much data in half the time."

Guy Two: "That'll never work. I used to own more than 200 framiwitzers. We tried it every different way, but it was a complete waste of time."

Guy One: "Sure but that was because your framiwitzers were analog. Now that they're digital we can push the compression of the schmutzer until they re-sync."

Guy Two: "No way. Schmutzers are specifically designed to slow down the render rate. We tried to increase the compression, but it never worked."

Mercifully that was about the moment that I heard the little bell ding over the PA and was able to open my laptop, crank up some Living Colour, and drown them out.

When I pulled my headphones off a few hours later to go to the bathroom, the two of them were still at it. Guy One was explaining some new technological advancement he was testing and Guy Two was insisting that he'd already tried it and that it would never work.

It finally dawned on me that Guy One was not from the video industry. Unlike his more experienced seat mate, he came to the business with fresh views and fresh ideas. He was bright-eyed and bushy tailed and full of excitement about all the possibilities. On the other hand, Guy Two was an industry lifer who had seen and heard it all. He knew everything there was to know about each idea and knew for certain that none of it would ever work.

Mark Zuckerberg, the guy who created Facebook and changed social media forever, did not come from the college yearbook business nor was he from the communication business. Elon Musk, the brains behind Tesla, did not come from the auto industry. Pierre Omidyar, eBay's originator, did not come from the auction business.

Need more? Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, the designers of Airbnb, the online room rental service that is worth more industry players Wyndham, Hilton Hotels, and Hyatt combined, did not come from the hotel business. They were just two guys who wanted to rent out their San Francisco loft in order to help cover their rent.

Do you notice a pattern here?

These disintermediators of the communications, automotive, auction, and hotel businesses did not come from the businesses they ultimately disrupted. Instead, they used their knowledge of the Internet and programming, combined with a belief that there had to be another way to accomplish what they set out to do, to zig when everyone else zagged.

The trend that shows no sign of abating is not just the elimination of legacy

business models but that the slashing will continue to be done by people who come from outside the industries that they disrupt. Technology is ubiquitous, good ideas can come from anywhere, and those outside the industry don't know what can't be done because they've never done it before.

You're wondering **"What's next?"** And your employees are too.

Lots of them believe that **the time to jump ship is now.** And that's exactly what they are doing.

Back to my flight and the argument between Guy One and Guy Two? It's still going on. Guy Two is toast. He just doesn't know it yet.

Of course, it's easy for us to laugh at this situation because we're not in the video business and you're probably not in the automotive or auction businesses either. But that should be cold comfort to anyone who's paying attention to what's going on right now.

Do you remember the scene in the movie *Poltergeist* when the worried parents came home to find their young daughter staring at a TV screen full of static? The spooky little girl turned around and announced to her terrified folks, "They're here."

In the real-life version of that movie, disintermediation will affect all of us sooner or later. Sure, the entrepreneurs with the big ideas will go after the low-hanging fruit first. But it won't be too long before they come after you and me. If they haven't already.

Needless to say, this understanding, or at least the feeling of ennui and discomfort it creates, is not a secret. Just like you're wondering "What's next?" your employees and workmates are too. Of course, some of them are too cemented to their current reality to do anything about it. But lots of them have realized that the time to jump ship is now. And that's exactly what they're doing.

How will we change our lifestyles?

Thanks to COVID, we've introduced many new practices and technologies to our daily lives. These include at-home food deliveries from both grocery stores and restaurants; Zoom family calls; wearing masks in public; and fist-bumping to greet friends.

Think about it – when Barack Obama the president of the United States, some naysayers called the fist-bump the president shared with his wife a "terrorist fist jab." Now most of us regularly bump knuckles or elbows to say hello to friends and new acquaintances we meet.

THAT'S a profound change.

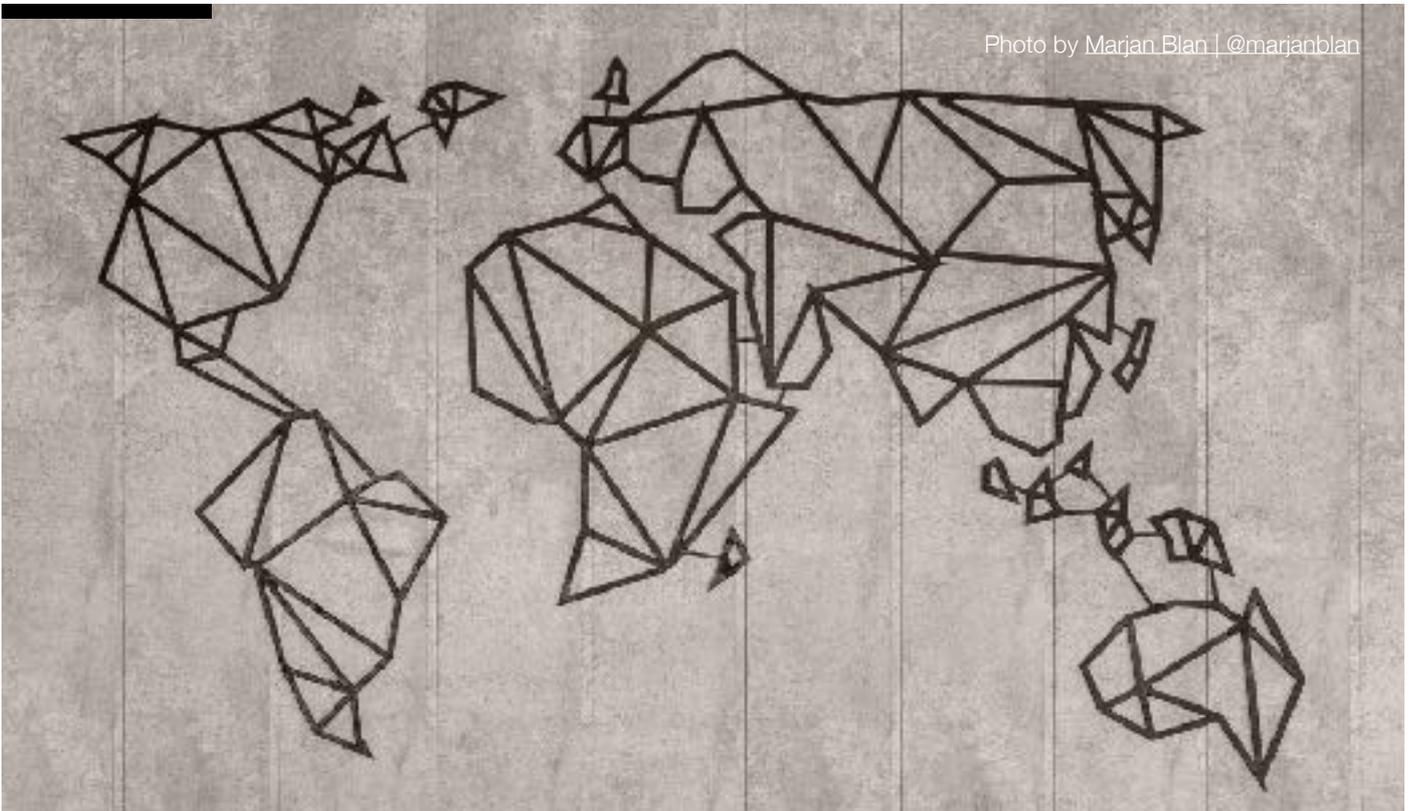
How about masks? Despite the fact that some people have politicized mask wearing and try to paint it as an example of governmental overreach and control, I love the fact that I haven't had a cold or sore throat in almost a year and a half. While I'm not going to become an obsessive mask wearer, I will continue to pull it on when I get on airplanes, in stores and shopping malls, and when I'm in other crowded places.

Analog Activities in a Digital Age

People used to sit on the porch or in the parlor and play musical instruments.

Today we just hit the "play" button on Apple Music or Spotify and listen to anything we want.

People used to grow seasonally appropriate fruits and vegetables in window boxes and backyard gardens.



HOW HAVE COMPUTERIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

Today we pick out virtually any fruits or vegetables we want from the displays at Whole Foods, Trader Joe's or our local grocery stores.

People used to prop their cars up on jack stands and change their oil or fix their cars in their driveways.

Today we drop our cars off with a professional mechanic who does a computer analysis before unclipping the failing parts and plugging in the brand new parts.

Or we simply dispense with our own cars all together and turn to our phones to hail rides with convenient apps such as Uber and Lyft.

As computerization takes over more and more of our lives, old school analog knowledge and skills are giving way to up-to-the-minute, instantaneous digital solutions.

Globalization means seasonal fruits are now available year-round. Because when

peaches aren't ripening in Georgia, they're filling the trees in Chile or China. And they're available by the bushel, without a bruise, bump, or bug between any of them in your backyard store.

Globalization means seasonal fruits are now available year-round. When peaches aren't ripening in Georgia, they're filling the trees in Chile or China.

Computerized engine management means cars don't break down any longer. Besides that, since the average lease only lasts three years or 36,000 miles, what's the chance you're going to be driving an older car anyway?

And you'll never ever find a missed note or a forgotten lyric on a professionally produced and recorded song.

All of these newer solutions tend to be faster, cheaper, more convenient, more precise, and certainly more ubiquitous.

When was the last time you Cotton-picked a guitar, gapped a spark plug or root-pruned a basil plant?

For that matter, when was the last time you spread gesso on a canvas, reefed your mainsail, waxed your board, prepped a chiffonade of basil, roll cast a fly or learned to skateboard fakie?

Sadly, one of the downsides of such ubiquitous digital activity is that while it tends to be cheaper, faster, and more successful than analog production, it doesn't provide a feeling of satisfaction. And modern information workers surveyed complain about not being connected to their work, not feeling fulfilled by what they do, and not

Today there are more than **80 million Baby Boomers** in the United States. **Baby Boomers** are the generation born between **1946 and 1960** and more than **7,000 Boomers** turn **60 every single day.**

understanding what their part is in the overall production of their companies.

In other words, they feel like an anonymous cog in a big, faceless machine.

And when they get home it doesn't get better because more and more of their time and attention is being consumed by arm's length digital activities that they watch, play or listen to while plopped on an overstuffed couch. Needless to say, this doesn't bring them more enjoyment, satisfaction or accomplishment either.

Demographic and Generational Changes

Today there are more than 80 million Baby Boomers in the United States. Boomers were born between 1946 and 1960 and more than 7,000 turn 60 every single day. They are the wealthiest generation in history, controlling more than 3/4s of all wealth in the U.S. What's more, Boomers are about to get a lot richer. Over the next 10 years, Baby Boomers will inherit more than 8.4 trillion dollars from their parents. It is the largest transfer of wealth in the entire history of the world.

That breaks down to \$300,000 each for 70% of all Boomers, 10% of who will inherit more than 1.5 million dollars. Because this cohort has the lowest savings rates in history, it begs these obvious questions:

1. Will Boomers see their windfall as a second chance and squirrel their new found money away?
2. Will they use the windfall to pay off their debts and start clean? Or,
3. Will they see the new income as an unexpected gift and continue with their profligate ways?



Only time will tell. But one thing's for sure. Their lives are about to change dramatically. And that means yours might, too. Especially if you depend on them showing up for work every day.

Right behind the Boomers is Generation X. This is the largest generational group with a population totaling 92 MM. They were born between 1965 and 1980 and are between 35 and 55 years old.

Generation Xers comprise 25% of the US population and control 29% of net worth dollars and 31% of total income.

While Boomers tend to think of Gen Xers as "kids," they are solidly in middle age and are dealing with the same disillusionments, disappointments, and other Ds as their older brothers and sisters. And that suggests that they are just as restless, if not even more so.

Think about how your grandparents or your great grandparents lived. They spent the first third of their lives in school, they spent the second third of their lives working, and if they were lucky, they spent the final third of their lives playing golf somewhere in the sun.

Now compare that to your life. If you're a college graduate or perhaps you went to graduate school, you've probably spent a lot more time — and money — in school than your parents or grandparents ever did.

After that, you probably also spent much more time at your job — investing it not only with your life and labor, but also your very personal identity.

But at some point, the challenges you met and the success you enjoyed just wasn't enough. And you started looking around for something more. You started wondering "Is that all there is?"

In my case, my grandfather's family left Poland and came to the United States a few years before the First World War when my grandfather was a little boy. I have to believe that my grandfather's expectations of what his work would provide him with centered around money and security. Besides needing to find his way in a country where he didn't speak the language or understand the customs, my grandfather needed to earn enough money to feed himself and help support his family.



My father and my grandfather Nat in New York, 1946

Education, purpose, enjoyment, and the like must have all taken a backseat to immediate opportunity and to cold hard cash.

So, imagine if you or I were to try to explain to my granddad exactly why we were dissatisfied with our careers and our lives. My grandfather had escaped the deadly pogroms of Poland and later returned to Eastern Europe to save three of his sisters from near certain death at the hands of the Third Reich. By the time he retired, he owned a home, a business, and a Cadillac. Plus, he had put his three children through college, and was still able to buy a condo on Miami Beach and spend his remaining days playing pinochle.

As American Dreamy as all that might seem today, would any of those experiences have given my grandfather any understanding of your needs for fulfillment and self-expression? And for that matter, how many of the things that mattered to him are important to you?

Of course, those questions are rhetorical. My grandpa Nat could no more live your life than you could live his. And while his problems and concerns might seem more existential through the refining lens of history and experience than your own, who's to say they were more real or troubling to him than yours are to you? We're each dealt the cards we get, and we each have to play the best hand we can manage.

Remember that while these things are happening to you, they are also happening simultaneously to your employees. And so, more than ever, we need to figure out, "Is that all there is?" for ourselves, our companies, and the people who work for us.

How to Begin Your Shift from The Great Resignation to The Great Retention —

Freeing yourself from the tyranny of seamlessness.

Have you posted videos on YouTube recently? If so, have you tracked your viewership numbers? I have. And I discovered that one of the most important things about shooting good video is good quality. Viewers will put up with fuzzy shots or shaky images, but not bad sound.

Because of that, I'm always fretting about how to get the best sound on my videos. I experiment with new microphones to hear which work best. And the best microphone is always the one you have with you when you need it, I always try to carry one of my mics so I can shoot spontaneous videos when the mood, inspiration or opportunity arises. Depending on where I'm going, I choose from a wired lapel mic, a big unidirectional mic or my favorite, a little Bluetooth mic called "Hey Mic!"

But sometimes I'll come up with the perfect idea when I don't have a mic with me at all. Then I have to settle for Apple's white earbuds to make sure the video sounds as good as possible. And each time I do, I'm always concerned that the white lumps of plastic in my ears and the white wires running down the side of my face will be distracting.

But no one seems to care.

Nobody has ever commented or criticized the un-professionalism of that approach. Some people criticize with what I have to say, and they disagree with my conclusions, but they never mention the wires. And my viewership numbers have never suffered because of the iPods sticking out of my ears.

When I was in high school, our marching band played the Star-Spangled Banner at Disney World, in the middle of the Magic Kingdom. But when we first got to the park, we didn't lug our instruments

down Main Street. Instead we were hustled into a tunnel and whisked underground beneath the Magic Kingdom, all the way to Cinderella's Castle. That's where we magically appeared right in front of the audience.

Everything above ground was seamless and perfect in Disney's special way. But underneath the park, the Magic Kingdom was just a little less magic. We saw people who played the Disney characters on their breaks. They took off their cartoon heads to slurp sodas and smoke cigarettes (this was in the last century, after all).

We saw seamstresses repairing costumes and electricians fixing wiring. And we saw sanitation workers lugging bins of garbage to the giant dumpsters hidden in the back.

We saw all this because we were "working" at Disney. But the paying guests saw none of it. They just enjoyed a seamless experience where everything was impossibly perfect.

Think about the things you used to do that are just about impossible now because of what COVID has wrought:

Maybe your scrupulously touched up roots are showing in all their gray glory.

Perhaps your regularly trimmed hair is now unruly and shaggy (I know mine is).

Maybe you haven't been to the gym as often as you like, maybe you haven't been to the cleaners or the bank.

Maybe online home schooling was a little less educational and a little more raucous than you expected. Maybe you're tired of a dinner of beans and rice for the fourth night in a row.

Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”



Like the teeming tunnels under Disney World, or the white wires peeking out of my ears on my videos, sometimes seamlessness just isn't possible.

What we've come to learn thanks to all the upheaval in our lives is that maybe it's not even necessary.

You saw that on Saturday Night Live's home broadcasts. You saw that when you watched your favorite musician host an online concert. You experienced that when your home delivery grocery service brought the wrong things or your "next day" Amazon delivery took a few more days than usual.

But guess what? Despite all these things not going quite the way you expected, life went on.

That doesn't mean that the experience or the content of what you're doing isn't valuable. It just means that perhaps it's a little too hard to keep everything as perfect as usual.

For years I've said that "people don't choose what you do, they choose who you are." Today's new normal is proving that to be truer than ever. If you're truly sharing your knowledge and talents and a bit of who you are, your shaggy gray locks or small faux pas are just a little

more of who you are. And in a time when people are desperate for certainty, the certainty of who you are is exactly what your audience wants and appreciates.

It's the same for your business and your HR activities. It's no longer required, or even necessary, to behave as if you have all the answers. The combination of the technological upheavals we discussed, the Democratization of Information, Globalization, and Computerization, all exacerbated by COVID 19's catalytic mechanism, have changed the playing field drastically. Today it's not only fine, but encouraged and appreciated for you to admit to your staff three things:

- A. You don't have all the answers,**
- B. You're figuring it out as you go along, and**
- C. They will be involved in the conversation.**

Just remember that as you clearly communicate these things, you are scrupulous about letting the people who count on you know that you care about them and that you have their best interests at heart.

As Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

And, as Maya Angelou famously said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

The Difference Between Algorithms Elbow Grease.

As you try to figure out how to create a workplace that encourages retention – and now that you know that it's critical that you understand what your personnel is thinking and feeling – let's add one more concern to the Nine Ds we talked about earlier: the gap between algorithms elbow grease.

Because you've been paying attention to the news these days, you've been watching the growing gap between algorithms and elbow grease. You probably just didn't know that that was what you were looking at. But from now on you'll see it everywhere.

I believe this conflict is becoming the defining juxtaposition of our times; comparing the effects of strenuous physical exertion to technological solutions facilitated by computers.

The Grammarist defines elbow grease as: “Hard work, energetic physical labor, especially labor that involves vigorous rubbing or polishing.”

Again, from *The Grammarist*: “An algorithm is logical procedure that is applied to a problem in order to solve that problem. Computers commonly use algorithms.”

Make sense yet? Perhaps it would be easier with some simple examples from everyday life:

This term will become more and more popular because it can also serve as the metaphor for the growing divide between the haves and the have nots, both in this country and around the world. Internet billionaires, information entrepreneurs

(infopreneurs), and hedge fund managers are algorithms. Gardeners, waitresses, and baggage handlers are elbow grease.

Before you think elbow grease only defines blue-collar workers who labor with their hands, think of this: plenty of white-collar workers jobs will eventually be replaced by computer code, fitting them squarely in the elbow grease category. This includes accountants, engineers, diagnosticians, and even radiologists.

What we know now is that the changes we all take for granted today will continue to pose great upheaval in the near future. For example, you already know that the Uber ride you take today will be provided by a driverless car in ten or twenty years. And that seems like a good thing because it will undoubtedly save money and time, reduce congestion, and free up parking spaces. But it also means that the career of driving, a business segment which employs ten to 15% of all working men in the US, will be replaced by computers, robots, and drones. Where will those

displaced drivers go to earn a living and define their worth?

It's not like this is a new phenomenon, by the way. When the agricultural revolution replaced hunting and gathering, it was a more primitive example of algorithms vs. elbow grease. When the industrial revolution replaced the feudal system of labor management, it was another example of the same conflict. And when the Information Age supplanted the Industrial Age, it was yet another example of this paradox.

Each shift resulted in massive changes that could be felt geographically, economically, culturally, religiously, and geo-politically. The only difference between those shifts and the ones that we are experiencing today is that we look at those older changes with the benefit of history and hindsight and that they happened much more slowly and over a much longer period of time than the changes we're experiencing today.

The phone app connecting you and your Lyft driver is the algorithm.

The driver is the elbow grease.

The program helping you train for the marathon is the algorithm.

The effort to run the sweaty distance is the elbow grease.

Quicken software is the algorithm.

The time you spend balancing your account is the elbow grease.

What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task.” Viktor Frankl

Today's battle between algorithms and elbow grease might just be the largest social experiment and reorganization of responsibility and remuneration humankind has yet experienced. Much like the hungry mouse running around in a researcher's maze, we don't know which turn will get us to the cheese nor which one will lead us to a dead end. But like the mouse, what we do know is that if we want a successful outcome, we'd better start exploring our options and get going.

More importantly, we'd better start showing our own workers how we can help them transition to relevant positions that will ensure their ability to earn a living as the world continues to evolve. Solutions might be educational vouchers, internal training curriculum, clearly defined advancement tracks, and other programs that show your people that their future is not only secure with you but that it will continue to grow and advance.

The Experience and Purpose of Being Alive, and Being Employed.

Think of a time when you felt 100% alive and undistracted – a time when you were really in the zone. Chances are that it was when you were completely focused on something external; someone or something else than yourself. Playing sports or music, getting lost in a great book or movie, or necking with your partner are a few great examples.

Lacking an external focus, the mind turns inward on itself and creates problems, even if the problems are undefined or unimportant. But when you find a focus, an ambitious goal that seems impossible and forces you to grow, these doubts disappear.

Ferry Porsche said, “The search for a purpose in our lives is universal and will never change.”

Mark Twain said you should, “experience being alive.”

Doctors say that one of the keys to fortifying life is to become a lifelong learner. Study a new language, take up

knitting, start playing a musical instrument, plant a garden, paint a portrait. What the studies show is that what you do is less important than trying to do something new and unfamiliar.

Try a new sport, write your memoir, volunteer at a hospital or maybe a polling place, focus on doing most anything that requires you to step outside of yourself and challenge your own moribund status quo.

Looking for purpose? Ironically, the key to finding purpose is to do things with purpose. Don't worry as much about what those things are doing for you – rather, concentrate on what your activities are doing for others or for your own understanding of the world around you.

Visit an older neighbor. Adopt a stray dog or cat. Write a letter to the editor. Visit a new city. Try a new cuisine.

In 1900, the average American life expectancy was 46 years. Today the average American life span is 79. Clearly, we're living longer – almost twice as long. But have we only added years to our life, or have we also added life to our years?

In her book *Elderhood*, Dr. Louise Aronson points out that “owing to improvements in public health, nutrition and medical advances, the percentage of people older than 70 in the United States in 2018 was 15% and climbing... If you make it to eighty, you have a good chance of making it to ninety or beyond.”

As Dr. Aronson writes: “There is no set age when we transition from adult to elder, and both the speed and extent of aging vary widely. As geriatricians are fond of saying: ‘When you've seen one eighty-year-old, you've seen one eighty-year-old.’”

The way you choose to define your life's purpose is completely up to you, no matter how old you are. Your lack of satisfaction, desire for change or even what's commonly referred to as your ‘midlife crises’ can happen anytime. After all, we can't know when ‘midlife’ is until we know when end of life will take place, can we?



If you're answering "YES" to these questions, it's easy to also see that your employees would answer the same way. It also becomes easier to see that a workplace that doesn't provide opportunities for continuing growth and development is not going to remain fulfilling for very long.

When unemployment was high, and both wages and job opportunities were low, perhaps you didn't have to worry about these things. If you provided market-competitive wages, there were people who would be interested in working for you. But today, based on the reality of more and more companies offering more and more money for the same workers, it has become critical that you provide your workers with the other opportunities they're looking for. These can include self-development, purpose-driven company missions,

stipends for education or community activities, and other programs that tell your staff that you care about them and their hopes and dreams, not just their ability to punch a time clock and earn a good day's pay for a good day's labor.

Life exists to be enjoyed. There's no reason for our staff members to stay in a situation that makes them unhappy.

Studies show that the workplaces that cater to their worker's extracurricular needs have significantly higher rates of retention and employee satisfaction than companies that simply provide a competitive wage.

Why? Because what we DO know is that given today's competitive environment, there's no good reason for our staff members to stay in a situation that makes them unhappy, regardless of how well remunerated they are. What we also know is that living better can also help the people we work with to live longer.

After all, life exists to be enjoyed. The most important way for your employees and you to do that is to feel good about yourself. Love. Be loved. Never stop learning. Continual learning and service to things outside yourself are the keys. Because when you eliminate the extraneous and the unimportant and focus on what matters, the experience and purpose of being alive is to experience being alive. And if you can help your people achieve that, they will repay you with loyalty and dedication.

ARMING Yourself for The Great Retention.

My friend, the economist Mary Kelly (who has the title “Commander” before her name and the letters “PhD” after her name) stood onstage in Orlando and told everyone at the conference how to find and keep the best employees. Dr. Kelly calls it her ARMED system – an acronym that spells out the steps to do just that:

1. **Attract**
2. **Recruit/Retain**
3. **Mentor/Manage**
4. **Evolve**
5. **Develop**

Dr. Kelly says the key to providing those five opportunities for your employees and potential employees is to answer the following three questions:

1. **What do THEY want?**
2. **What are YOU willing to do?**
3. **What are YOU willing to give up to provide for their wants and needs?**

If you consider both the five components of Dr. Kelly's ARMED system, and the answers to her three questions, you'll see that the retention they will help you achieve is well within your control.

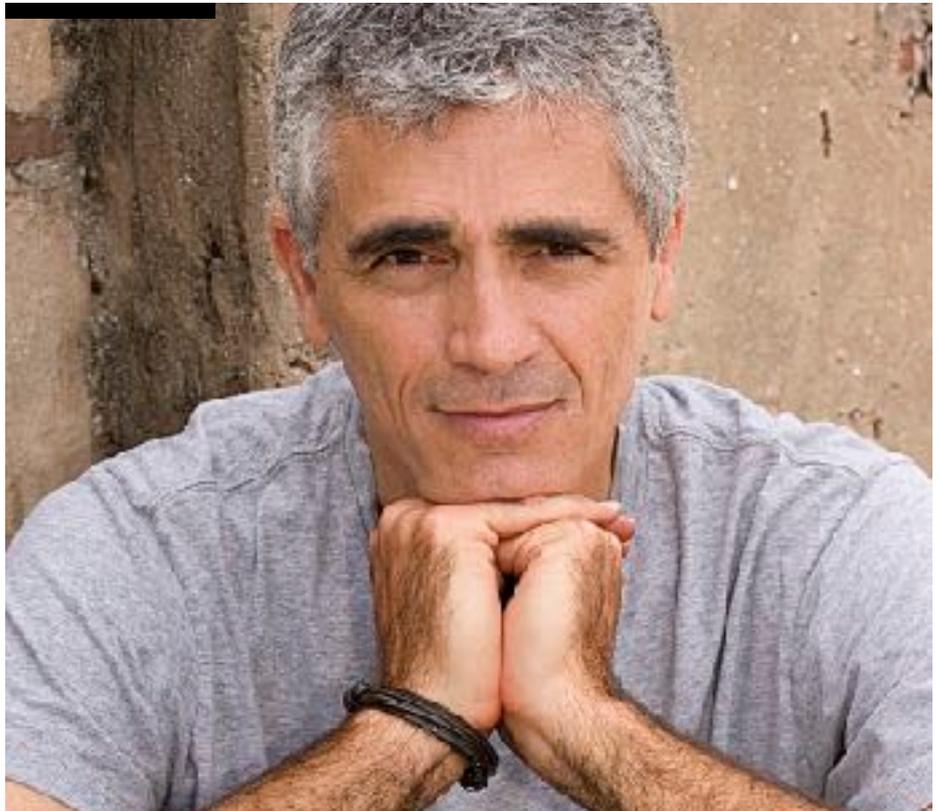
By giving up on the illusion of seamlessness, and instead focusing on who your employees are, what they want, and how you can help them achieve it, your ability to create a workplace that not only belies the perceptions of The Great Resignation but realigns them to create Great Retention is significantly less complicated – and less expensive – than you first thought.

The answer is there. The question is, when are you going to get started?

What do **THEY** want?

What are **YOU** willing to do?

What are **YOU** willing to give up to provide for their wants and needs?



Bruce Turkel

Bruce makes his clients' brands and their lives more valuable.

Bruce has worked with many great organizations including Nike, Discovery Networks, Bacardi, SC Johnson, Philips, Hilton, HBO, Hard Rock Hotels, IHG Hotels, and Miami tourism.

Bruce has spoken at MIT, Harvard, NSA, ASAE, MPI, and hundreds and hundreds of other conferences.

Bruce has been on NPR, MSNBC, and CNN and was the brand commentator for FOX Business. He's been featured in *Fast Company Magazine*, *Forbes*, *Communications Arts* magazines and *The New York Times*. He has published five books on advertising including his latest – *All About Them*. And he just released his new book on the great pivot titled, *Is That All There Is?*

Bruce is an avid harmonica player and recorded with The Southbound Suspects and his current band Blackstar. Bruce's band has backed up Bo Diddley, Bobby Ingram, and Bob Weir, and opened for The Young Rascals, Jefferson Starship, Grand Funk, Eddie Money, Mollie Hatchet, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels and many more.

You can see more about Bruce and contact him at www.BruceTurkel.com.