



Quiet Quitting

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In an office today, an employee will close their laptop at 5:00 p.m. and go home—without their laptop in hand, without a “to do” list of emails to write before bedtime, without a stack of work papers to read before returning to the office.

Why? Because work that spills into life beyond the office sucks dry their enthusiasm for the work’s purpose. Because work-related stresses are deteriorating their mental health. Because their job description specifies forty work hours per week.

In a fast-food restaurant today, an employee will greet customers and run the register and take orders and mop the floor—but they will not step in to supervise the kitchen or offer to complete end-of-day tallies or stay late to cover a missed shift.

Why? Because life commitments beyond work need to be honored. Because work satisfaction doesn’t drive their self-satisfaction. Because additional responsibilities should come with additional pay.

“Above and beyond” is a highly praised work ethic in employees, but as a work culture of employers, “above and beyond” can contribute to dissatisfaction, burnout, and turnover.

Why? Because unspoken expectations (“You’ll complete fifty-five hours’ worth of tasks in forty hours/week”) lead to unmet goals. Because “going the extra mile” is too often code for “working more for the same pay.” Because busyness isn’t purpose. Because the constant hustle to impress an employer problematically ties self-worth to professional achievement.

That’s why “quiet quitting” is trending in business news, as

employees reinforce their personal boundaries around work: “I will work on my responsibilities within the limits of time and pay set for this job.” They’re not quitting work. They’re quitting the work culture of “above and beyond.”

Quiet quitting echoes the desire for justice heard across historical movements for workplace fairness: movements that urged fair wages, reasonable shifts, protections from exploitation, equal pay across genders and races, paid sick days; movements that achieved measurable rights for the sake of an immeasurable belief that people should not be defined by their economic benefit to others.

People should not be defined by their economic benefit to others. Not in the for-profit world. Not in the nonprofit world. Not in the church world. Not at all.

Somewhere in a workplace today, an employee is known as a person, not a job title; supported as a person, not a buffer against the bottom line; respected as a person, not a means to an end; engaged as a person, not an asset or liability. May it be so in every place of employment.

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