#lovework
CULTUREBOOK

Updated May 20, 2023

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WELCOME TO #LOVEWORK!

We appreciate you reading our CultureBook, and for joining us on this journey in whatever way you are (exploring our company, joining our team, etc.).

We are on a pretty big mission — **to create a world where everyone can love work** — so we need all the help we can get. And if you haven't heard it from us enough already, we believe your gifts, talents, and energizing strengths could very well be *exactly* what it will take to meet this enormous challenge head-on!
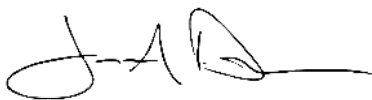
Since we teach how to be astonishingly great places to work, we believe it is absolutely *vital* we practice this ourselves. That's why this CultureBook exists — to help ensure that we "eat our own cooking," so to speak.

In here, you'll find a constantly-evolving compilation of principles and practices that help us accomplish our mission while living our values.

Working here isn't only about the output, you see. It's equally about the WAY we go about getting the output.

We are always looking for ways to become the best versions of ourselves and we strive to create organizational principles that actually *help us* do that. If you join our team, it will be part of *your* work to offer suggestions for how to make this book better, too. Like all of us humans, this CultureBook is a work-in-progress.

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about what makes us tick!

Josh Allan Dykstra, CEO

OUR "BOSS"

Everyone here works for the same noble cause: **To create a world where everyone can love work.***

Hopefully it's fairly self-explanatory, but here's a bit more to make sure we're clear: Right now, somewhere around 87% of people (!) are disengaged by, dispassionate about, and disconnected from the work they do in fundamental ways.

This is a tragic and horrible shame — not only for the people who suffer (and that word is not an exaggeration, which you know if you've ever had a terrible boss), but also for the organizations they work in, as it means literally *billions* of dollars in productivity being lost.

So, in response to this, we will do whatever's in our sphere of influence to foster a work revolution, helping to turn that number around so 87% of people (or more) can be passionate and actually <u>love</u> their work!

From a business perspective, this is our fundamental strategic imperative — **it's our "boss,"** so to speak. Everyone who works here serves at the pleasure of this mission, from the newest colleague to the founders of the company.

Do your activities help create a more energized workplace for *someone*? If not, you are most likely working on the wrong things...!

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*We realized early on that a cause this big could actually suffocate us if we weren't careful. (Of course, we have VB#5 to check-and-balance this, but still.) As we pondered this more deeply, we realized that the mission *does* work, as long as we do one vital thing: **include *our own workplace* in our mission**. Please remember that part, as it's your job (and all of our jobs!) to help make sure OUR company is always leading the way in being a place where we love our work!

VITAL BEHAVIORS

Vital Behaviors describe HOW we will go about accomplishing our noble cause.

We are deadly serious about living these, and will guard them fiercely—and if/when you become a part of our team, we'll expect you to do the same. Everyone in our team is expected to practice and embody these behaviors in authentic and passionate ways — and to hold everyone else on the team to a high bar of striving to live them, as well.

1. SHARE THE LOVE
WHEN DONE WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE:
- Providing customers with a feeling of delight... and ideally an exclamation of "WOW!"
- Creating an unparalleled, simple, friction-free, Disney-like experience
- Striving to make every interaction — with colleagues, investors, customers, everyone — an experience where they can feel my sincerity, warmth, and most importantly, love

2. START WITH ENERGY
WHEN DONE WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE:
- Relentless, ongoing uncovering of my own highest and best contribution
- Frequent conversations and inquiries about what energizes/drains me and the people around me
- Seeking the life-giving option in all situations and assuming positive intent in others

3. RUN THE EXPERIMENT
WHEN DONE WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE:
- Continually taking the self-starting initiative to try new and bold things
- Moving experiments to "safe to try" status as quickly as possible so iterations can happen
- Openly sharing learning moments I am encountering with the team so everyone can benefit

4. FIND THE &

WHEN DONE WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE:
- Cultivating and spreading a perspective of abundance — there's enough for everyone!
- Little to no use of "stop" words in conversation ("but," "no," "unfortunately," etc.)
- Creative ability to find non-zero-sum solutions to help all stakeholders "win"

5. BE A WHOLE PERSON

WHEN DONE WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE:
- Having a clear sense of boundaries and keeping the team informed about what they are
- Celebrating and making time for positive relationships inside and outside of work
- Embracing the messy reality of the human condition (emotions, families, etc.)

These Vital Behaviors should give you a good overview of our social contract, AND there are a lot more Principles throughout the rest of this book. Keep reading to get a more complete picture of how we are collectively agreeing to work together!

TWO FOUNDATIONAL IDEAS

We hold two foundational ideas to be true:

1) **We use no coercion** (no one can force anyone else to do anything), and
2) **We keep the commitments we make.**

We borrowed these from a company we admire a great deal, Morning Star. There's quite a lot packed into these short statements, so we recommend you watch **this video**.

Essentially, most of the practice of "law" can be summed up with these two short statements; the first is the basis of criminal law and the second is the basis of civil law.

It is essential for us to continually cultivate an environment of deep psychological safety, and these ideas help us do just that.

OPENING THOUGHTS

Our organization runs a self-organizing, "energy-based operating system." This means at #lovework you will never have a "manager" who will tell you what to do. (If you need to know more about what this all means, please **watch this**.)

Like everyone here, <u>your *true* boss is our mission</u>. While we do have a few people who have been around for awhile, nobody will ever stand over your desk to make sure you're working or to see what you'er working on. (Which is good, because many of us often work from home and that would be more than a little creepy.) When you join our team, we trust you to be smart enough to figure out what to do. That said, if you want someone's help with figuring out what to work on next, just ask!

If you're a full-time colleague / stakeholder, we are entrusting you with managing your part of this company *exactly like you owned the company* (and maybe you will someday!). You have the freedom to craft your role around your strengths and what energizes you most while still honoring your commitments to the team. This is a pretty neat thing, but also comes with some pretty serious responsibility — meaning, we now *expect* you to continually grow/learn/develop/initiate/create/build *something* new/cool/excellent/valuable/ beautiful. It's a big job, yes, but we're pretty sure you're up to the challenge. And if you feel the gravity of all this... well, good. We have a lot of fun, AND we take the impact of our work very seriously!

Outside of the starting tasks that have been communicated through the interview process, what else might you do to get started...? Good question, with a fairly straightforward answer: *look for activities that help us accomplish our mission, line up with what energize you most, and what the business needs — and go do those things.* Figuring out what those activities are might take a bit of research on your part, so talk to people who have been here for awhile. Ask them to connect you with great customers so you can talk to them. Do some research online. There are plenty of ways to get information, so jump in and get it!

WORK WHEREVER YOU WANT, TRULY

Our official "headquarters" office is in Denver, Colorado, and we're currently a Colorado-based LLC, if you're curious.

Your day-to-day place of work can be in your home, in a coffee shop, in a co-working space, or wherever you feel like you can do your most energized and effective work.

We trust that by this point in your life you've learned how to navigate the usages of moving vehicles that take you from place to place, and you're more than intelligent enough to be wherever you need to be in order to get your job done.

It's our hope that this flexibility/autonomy allows you to A) discover the best work environment that enables your most productive work habits, and B) matches up with the kind of work you're performing.

IF A MEETING SUCKS, WE'RE DOING IT WRONG

There are all kinds of great reasons to have a gathering of great minds (or in more boring language, a "meeting"): to stay socially-connected, to discuss new ideas, to make decisions, to create new processes, to celebrate, to give feedback, and many other things.

We know that in many organizations most meetings totally suck, and we will try *very* hard to never be that kind of company.

If any meeting you are in feels like it's regularly sucking out your energy, it's *your responsibility* to say something to someone so we can work together to fix it!

Here's one suggestion that can make meetings better: *always let the meeting's purpose dictate its attendees.*

This means every meeting should ONLY include the people whose brains are needed to achieve the goals and purpose of the meeting. Sometimes this means you need to widen the circle and sometimes it means you need to just talk to one other person. Sometimes it means you need to politely decline the meeting invite and explain why you did. Sometimes it means you need to get more clarity as to why you should be there or about the purpose of the meeting in general.

Pay close attention to your energy level and focus-ability in every meeting — if you notice a recurring pattern that you want to work on something else or multi-task in a specific meeting, that MAY be an indication that something in that meeting has gone awry or that your highest and best contribution is doing something else. Bring it up with the meeting leader!

Working with great colleagues is one of the most enjoyable parts of our work. In other words — *if a meeting sucks, we're doing it wrong!*

SLACK: THE DIGITAL PLACE WE LIVE

Slack is the primary tool we use to communicate. (It's basically like instant messaging on steroids.) Click **here** to read a good primer. All group communication is classified into #channels to keep things organized. If you feel like a new topic is needed you can simply add it and invite people — please keep things simple, though! We want to have only as few #channels as possible.

When you're added to Slack as a new colleague, we only auto-add you to a few "mandatory" #channels — you probably don't want or need to be inundated with messages about absolutely everything company-wide. The other side of this, however, is that you're expected to take a look through all the other #channels to see if there are conversations you feel you want or need to be a part of. Please join any and all #channels you want to be a part of! (Don't be scared of trying out a #channel; you can always leave it later.) Within Slack, you also have the ability to send direct messages (DM) to any other team members (these messages are private between the two of you) and you can also create a group DM if you need a private forum for more than two colleagues.

The goal is to keep 100% of our team-related communication inside Slack *(i.e. no internal email)*. It's simply more efficient for everyone on the team when we keep all our communication in one central place so it can be archived and searched later. Of course, you'll still use email when you loop in people outside of our team.

We have a general expectation that you're available during normal business hours on Slack unless you've put something on your calendar or let us know otherwise.

Please **download** the Slack app on both your mobile device and your laptop. You can adjust and customize your notifications **here**. Happy Slacking!

ZOOM: WHERE WE LIVE WHEN WE AREN'T TYPING IN SLACK

Zoom is the video chat program we use to talk to each other, our partners, our clients, and even new connections as well whenever possible.

We do our best to talk on video and not on phone, for a number of reasons:

1) It helps us build and deepen our relationships as colleagues that rarely get to be in the same physical space

2) It makes our communication much more efficient and effective than audio only, since body language is such a huge part of dialogue

3) It gives us the ability to collaborate effortlessly and to share our screens to easily pass ideas back and forth

4) It allows us to do some things even better than we could do in person! For example, to help us call out each others' strengths as we see them, we put a screenshot of the Strengthscope® wheels of our closest colleagues on our computer desktop so we can "quick look" reference them in conversations. The ability to take a peek at these during a conversation to deeper our understanding and awareness about what powers our colleagues is a major benefit of primarily communicating virtually!

"PRO" ZOOM BONUS TIP: *Your Mac has a feature called Do Not Disturb, and we highly recommend using it — this will prevent any "dings" that emanate from your laptop from piercing your colleagues' eardrums…!*

VACATIONS & HOLIDAYS

Our perspective on vacation is pretty simple: *if you need a break, take one* — just make sure you follow the principles outlined in the "If You Leave…" section on the last page of this book. Some companies call this an "unlimited vacation policy." (By the way, we think "unlimited" is an OK start, but we are actively working towards a *mandatory* vacation policy… more on that coming soon!)

We are primarily concerned that you take the time you need in order to stay refreshed and focused and bring your best to work. For us, that's your true break/vacation directive — stay at your best. You're the only person who knows what this looks like for you! Also, please note that the #lovework office will be closed on the following days, so you've got some pre-scheduled days for extra rest:

✓ New Year's Day
✓ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
✓ President's Day
✓ Memorial Day
✓ Juneteenth (June 19)
✓ Independence Day (July 4)

✓ Labor Day
✓ Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving
✓ Christmas Day, New Year's Day + as much time as we can "close" around those two holidays (this will vary based on your role and the current business needs)

We also highly encourage you to take the day off on your birthday! This isn't mandatory, of course, but please go enjoy it as a special day off if at all possible.

SIDE NOTE ABOUT END-OF-YEAR HOLIDAY GIFTS: At the end of each calendar year, #lovework will donate your portion of our 1% Give Back Fund to an organization that matters to you! (See 1% Give Back section for more info.) Regarding other gifts, in order to create more equitability across the company, we recommend no one on the team get gifts for anyone else on the team. We may change this in the future, but for right now this helps us keep expectations simple.

BABIES & FAMILIES

We LOVE our families, and we love it if you love your family, too.

Our families keep us grounded and present, and help us remember that some of the most important things that are impacted by our work can't be found in the "office."

You see it right there in our Vital Behaviors (#5) that we embrace all the messy human-ness of life, and we're pretty sure you know as well as we do that family is often at the center of that (mostly delightful) mess!

Also, if you're an official Core Team member (more on that next), and you or your partner are having a baby (i.e. this is maternity <u>and</u> paternity), we currently offer two months of full-pay time off + one "transition month" where you can start to navigate what it looks like for you to come back to work.

Before you go, please coordinate with the team on who will cover your responsibilities while you're away.

And most importantly, CONGRATULATIONS!

At some point, when you're not napping, please post pictures in Slack so we can celebrate with you!

TEAMS & TEAM MEMBERS

We are all independent, self-managed people, but that doesn't mean we're "rugged individualists" — far from it. We are deeply committed to working in community; there are SO many things we do better together than we could ever do separately!

OUR TEAM MEMBERS

Our overall team is comprised of two groups: our Core Team and our Vendor-Partners (VPs). Use the handy table below to understand the similarities and differences of these different varieties of stakeholders.

CORE TEAM	VENDOR-PARTNERS (VPs)
Highly-valued member of our team	Highly-valued member of our team
Listed on our website(s)	May be listed on our website(s)
Strategic decisions	Tactical decisions
Weekly team check-ins	Check-ins when necessary
Full-time salaried (exempt from overtime)	Part-time salary (exempt), hourly (non-exempt), or Contractor (1099)
Base salary amount + results-based incentives whenever possible	Contracted rate + results-based incentives whenever possible
Company profit-sharing available	No company profit sharing
Equity/ownership path available	No equity/ownership path

ON ORGANIZATION & TEAMS

For any "sub-teams" we need, here are a few basic team principles:

✓ We form teams as we need them
✓ We disband teams when we don't need them anymore
✓ Anyone can lead a team by displaying clear leadership behaviors that other colleagues deem worth following (e.g. you call a meeting and people show up — congrats, you are the leader!).

ON ADDING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Let's be completely clear: when we need more people to help us, adding the RIGHT new team members is the most important thing we do.

We must *never* allow someone to join the #lovework team that will try to take us down the "traditional/management" path. *Nothing* will destroy our culture faster than having the wrong people join our team, and it's ALL of our jobs to make sure this doesn't happen.

To this end, we ask that you *always* be on the lookout for amazing, humble, talented people who share our mission. If someone is hands-down incredible, it would be very wise for us to attempt to run an experiment to see if their unique strengths meet a need we have in the business.

As you're on the lookout for great people, we recommend a large degree of patience. Be deliberately slow; build the relationship over time and get to know their *character*, not just their skills.

We tend to be slow to hire and quick to fire, if we somehow miss the mark. (Hey, we're human, it happens! Just hopefully not often.)

On the other hand, if you've identified a pressing need for the business and believe we need a new team member to help fill that need — great! Put an outline together for what you think the person in the position should do, the qualifications/requirements you think

they need to have, do an initial business/financial analysis, and get feedback on it from all relevant stakeholders on the team. If all stakeholders agree on the need and there is a strong business case for what you're proposing, we'll start putting the word out as quickly as we can!

If we're considering adding someone to the Core Team, we almost always do NOT bring them on in a full-time capacity to start. Instead, we do the following:

1) Create a contractor-level test project or trial period (experiment)
2) See how that project goes—do they exceed expectations? Meet them? Fail?
3) Explore how they fit in our culture with our core team in a variety of ways (having them join team check-ins, have them contribute to project calls, see how they interact on Slack, etc.)
4) Make sure they continue to get results in their objectives
5) Expand or reduce their role accordingly based on the experiment

QUALITIES WE LOOK FOR IN NEW TEAM MEMBERS

✓ Ability to move at a very fast pace
✓ Obsessively proactive and fantastically resourceful
✓ Uber-high-capacity to juggle many things at once
✓ Humility / self-awareness / authenticity
✓ Self-motivated hunger to make the world better
✓ Energy that fits the work we want them to do
✓ Ability and experience to do the job they need to do
✓ Fierce alignment with the things that matter most to us (these things are outlined in this CultureBook)

GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT NEW PEOPLE

✓ Would I want this person to be an owner of this company?
✓ Could I learn a significant amount from them?
✓ What if this person went to work for our "competition?"

✓ Would I mind getting stuck in an airport with this person?
✓ Would I get dinner/coffee/drinks with this person outside of work, even if we didn't work together?

THE ONLY 3 TRUE JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Will you love the job?
2) Can you do the job?
3) Will we love working with you?

THE 3 "FITS" WE LOOK FOR

1) Fit with role / appropriate strengths (skills+energizers)
2) Fit with organizational values and our self-management ethos
3) Fit with our organization's noble cause / mission

OPEN-BOOK FINANCES

We are an open-book financial company.

This means all colleagues have access to our full financial picture at any time, and are free to drill down into anything and ask any questions they like.

Individual salaries are currently visible to all full-time colleagues, and we're working to make these fully publicly-transparent soon.

Any colleague is welcome to see everything else, including a block category for what the company allocates towards "salaries/payroll."

We believe that having a clear picture of our company finances helps us all act like owners, which helps us all make better decisions and know what we can (or can't) do from a financial resource perspective.

It also means that we want you to have the sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to understand our financial picture. As we grow, this will likely become a more formal process, but for now it's very much tied to your initiative — we expect you to gain whatever education you need in order to understand what's going on. We all start with differing amounts of financial understanding, so just make sure you can understand the things you need to understand, and if you're finding that you need help, go get it — use Google, find a local class, talk to someone, join an online learning course, etc.

THE COMPENSATION THING

Having you fairly compensated for the amazing work you do is very important to us.

And, let's take a moment and recognize that "compensation" isn't only about money — we even know **there's a point** at which money ceases to impact one's day-to-day happiness.

A little background: our English word "compensation" comes from the Latin word *compensare*, which means "a weighing one thing against another, a balancing."

If we dig a little deeper in our psyches, we find that what we *actually* want isn't money, *it's what money lets us do.* We want to live in the kind of place we want to live, we want to have enough possessions, we want to be with our families enough, we want to see our friends enough, we want to take vacations enough, etc. All these things require a bit of balancing, and each of us probably want/need a little different balance.

On the organization side, the idea of "balance" also includes balancing your pay with all the skills you bring to the business we don't have to train you to do, the network and relational connections you bring, the monetary cost of living where you are based, etc.

It's a multi-faceted thing, so we'll do our best to balance all these factors!

COMPENSATION PRINCIPLES

We also do our best to align your pay with your contribution to the business. In short, this means that as you contribute more value to the business, you make more monetary compensation.

We define "contribution of value" as having the following dimensions:

1) **Adding real value to the business through your specific role and your daily activities.**

In his book *Igniting the Invisible Tribe*, Josh describes 4 "groups" of value-adding activities. In a small organization like ours, it's very possible you might add value through multiple groups, though you may find yourself drawn to one or two based on your energizing strengths! These groups will become more visible as our company grows. You can add value...

➡ By building something **Creative**. This means you are creating/making a new product, service, sales channel, or creating a new twist on what we already offer — anything we can <u>sell</u> to help create more energizing work. These things are what our customers buy, and they are often one of the best ways to differentiate ourselves in the marketplace.

➡ By growing the **Community** of people who care about what we're offering. This means you help to build the tribe of people who give us permission to talk to them, fostering new relationships, expanding current relationships, etc. These things help us continue to serve more people with our Creative offerings.

➡ By fostering an energizing **Culture** inside our organization. This means doing things that make our workplace more life-giving and human. These things help us be more engaged, creative, and productive.

➡ Adding or managing **Currency**. This means finding ways to manage our money better, giving the team more visibility of finances, helping us allocate our resources better, eliminating wasteful processes, etc. These things help us stay lean and resourceful, which puts more money in all our pockets.

2) **Expressing our 5 vital behaviors in an embodied, authentic way (and always striving to do them more fully):**

1) Share the love

2) Start with energy

3) Run the experiment

4) Find the &

5) Be a whole person

3) **Living by the guiding principles outlined in this book**

    1. We have a BUNCH of principles; see the next section of this book!

NOTE: We periodically pulse a lightweight peer feedback process so you can always know how your peers see you doing on the above things.

RAISES & PROMOTIONS

Raises and promotions don't happen in traditional ways here. That doesn't mean you don't have opportunities for growth, though — quite the opposite, in fact. *If you want to make more money, we want you to!* In our world, it's pretty simple (not "easy"): *all you need to do to raise your financial compensation is create more value for the organization and take on more responsibility.* What this looks like will vary on a case-by-case basis and will be <u>very</u> much based on your strengths. You are welcomed and encouraged to initiate a dialogue about your compensation at any time!

OTHER BENEFITS

Regarding other benefits you get for working with us — we are constantly striving to make our company the best place to work in the world while also staying lean with the resources we have.

We round out the financial part of your compensation with as many other perks and benefits as the company can afford to make up what we consider to be your "total compensation" package.

Here are all the benefits and perks we're currently offering for Core Team members (and a few we aim to provide soon):

✓ Ridiculously flexible schedule — work *when* you want!

✓ Location independent — work *where* you want!
✓ No dress codes
✓ Unlimited vacation
✓ Stipend towards phone and/or internet
✓ Paid maternity/paternity leave
✓ Laptop provided when needed

<<< THINGS WE'RE WORKING ON! >>>

✓ Profit sharing — coming soon!
✓ 401(k) — coming soon!
✓ Perks program — coming soon!
✓ Stipend towards health insurance — coming soon!
✓ Stipend towards wellness/exercise — coming soon!
✓ "Mandatory Vacation" stipend — coming soon!
✓ Unlimited continuing education — coming soon!
✓ Equity/ownership pathway for CT members — coming soon!

1% GIVE BACK

For us, cultivating a spirit of generosity is an important thing.

We truly believe it's the responsibility of the privileged to help lift others whenever possible, and though we are still a scrappy, bootstrapped, startup kind of place, we are very fortunate to have what we have.

So, we take 1% of our total revenue and set it aside to give back in a variety of ways.

We are sometimes asked by our client partners to support foundations or organizations that are important to them, and we do that when we can. We allocate 25% of our 1% Give Back Fund for this purpose.

We also help #lovework colleagues give directly to the organizations that matter most to them. At the end of every calendar year, 75% of our 1% Give Back Fund is split evenly among all full-time #lovework colleagues. They get to choose where their portion goes, and the company donates on their behalf!

We are extremely proud to support others who are helping leave the world a bit better than they found it.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We're always learning practices and principles that help us work more effectively as a self-organizing team. To start, here's a quick note about the difference between "values" and "principles," from Ray Dalio:

> *Your values are what you consider important, literally what you "value." Principles are what allow you to live a life consistent with those values. Principles connect your values to your actions; they are beacons that guide your actions, and help you successfully deal with the laws of reality. It is to your principles that you turn when you face hard choices.*

In that spirit, below are our Guiding Principles. Got something we should add? Let **Josh** know!

COMMUNICATION

ASK LOTS AND LOTS AND <u>LOTS</u> OF QUESTIONS

We've found that questions are one of the best ways to help us communicate. We love to ask partners questions. We love to ask each other questions. We love to start our meetings with questions. Here are a couple of our favorite meeting openers:

- ✓ *When are you at your best?*
- ✓ *How are you creating a more energized workplace? (For someone... keep in mind that someone could be you!)*
- ✓ *What are you grateful for / what are you celebrating?*

Asking good, probing questions is one of the best ways to help people become the best version of themselves, so we are always working on building ways to ask more thoughtful, skillful, and insightful questions!

CALL OUT VITAL BEHAVIORS/ENERGIZERS/PRINCIPLES

We call out our colleagues when we see them living/practicing our Vital Behaviors and principles. We do this both in person on a live video chat or in our dialogue on Slack.

We've even programmed the Slackbot to give us a digital high-five when you type in "VB#" into a channel!

Similarly, we call out each others' energizers when we see them in action—and once you get in the habit, we think you'll find it's quite fun and affirming! *"Josh, your Detail Orientation energizer is showing!"*

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Don't ask other people questions you can answer yourself by just looking a little more closely at the PDF they're talking about, by peeking at their shared calendar, or by doing a search on Slack or Google.

Be resourceful and go find the answer yourself whenever you can; it's the best use of everyone's time.

TALK ABOUT WHY. A LOT.

When we talk about the "why" (the purpose behind whatever we're doing), we help give each other the tools to reason through making decisions.

So, paint vivid pictures of the future you're creating together. Zoom out. See the big picture. Then dig a layer deeper. Ask WHY one more time than you think you should. Talk about the story *behind* the story.

We've found that if we spend just a little more time on the philosophy behind our decisions, we don't just make better choices in that moment but we also learn HOW to make better decisions in the future.

(NOTE: Some energizers gravitate toward this perspective more naturally, notably Strategic Mindedness. Make sure you're pulling those people in to strategic conversations!)

EMOTE… DIGITALLY 😎

Because so much of our communication happens digitally, we also try to emote digitally. As you've probably noticed, written words have a "feeling" attached to them just like spoken words, but in writing this feeling can be communicated a bit more with nuanced wording, punctuation, etc.

Basically, just go out of your way to be extra kind in print, because it's much easier to come off as unkind in that medium (even if you don't mean it that way). In practice, this means you should try to thank people often, feel free to use fun emojis, reactions, and watch your punctuation — because it really does matter.

MAKE OFFERS, SUGGESTIONS, AND INVITATIONS

Even though we are utilizing a "self-managing" operating system, many times the internal, day-to-day business we do often looks a lot like it would in many other companies. One of the things that differentiates us is the way we talk to each other.

Because there aren't any "bosses" here, there also aren't any "directives" (remember, no coercion!). Instead, we make offers, suggestions, and invitations:

> *"Will you help me with this?"*
> *"Do you have time to join me for a discussion?"*
> *"Would you lend your brain to this meeting?"*
> *"Are you willing/able to _____?"*

All of us are fully responsible adults who can make our own decisions, and we treat each other like it.

ONLY WRITE SHORT EMAILS

A long email is almost always counter-productive.

Whether it's to a client, a prospect, or even one of our Vendor Partners that isn't in Slack, if you find yourself writing a long email, use that as a trigger to PAUSE and ask yourself: *"Is this really the best way to get the outcome I intend?"*

You'll find the answer is almost always, "No."

Email is too easily misunderstood, which derails the discussion into areas that are completely off-point. Many people don't read emails fully or carefully. And emails generally lack the deep nuance and speed of face-to-face dialogue.

So please, don't waste your energy writing an epic email masterpiece… have a conversation instead.

READ WHAT YOU WROTE

As a decentralized/virtual/remote team, an *enormous* amount of our communication is digital communication. Because of this, it serves all of us to continually try to become better at it.

For example, whenever you're writing a message on Slack or email, before you hit that Enter key, please make sure to pause, read it, add clarifying words, and edit if necessary. It doesn't take that long, and it saves a lot of back-and-forth silliness and miscommunication.

*NOTE: You can always edit your Slack message, too, even after you hit Enter! Go **here** to learn more ways to make your written messages more understandable in Slack.*

SOMETIMES ASK, SOMETIMES REQUEST

When you need something from a colleague, be *clear* in your request.

Don't be vague or nebulous; none of us here are mind readers (as far as we know). When you need more info or input on something, ask for it, and be clear about what exactly you're asking for.

This is a bit more difficult than it sounds, because all of us *hear* things completely differently based on our unique "energy filter."

Something that you feel was crystal clear in its presentation can often prompt more questions for someone else, so we need to be patient with each other.

All that said, there are also times when it's appropriate to just make known what you'd prefer to see happen, especially if you have a clear and passionate perspective on a topic. In these situations, clarity is best, too—be straightforward in your requests from others.

SPEAK UP!

Look for opportunities (meetings are generally good times!) to practice letting your energizers show. If you have a perspective on something that's being discussed, _share it_.

That said, we know you might not _always_ have a viewpoint or feel like you have something to say, and that's OK.

But if you _do_ have a perspective—you feel a twinge of emotion under the surface, a prompting, a tiny urge—we NEED you to share it. We are _all_ worse off if you have something to say and instead choose to keep it to yourself; even if your idea isn't entirely formed, trust your instincts and let it out. If you don't speak up, we've lost an opportunity we may never get back!

SHOW YOUR PASSION

Your passion isn't just "requested" here, it's _expected_ and _required_!

We need you to care deeply about your perspective, and to share it with courage.

We need you to be able to be able to share personal stories about why the company's mission is important to you.

We need you to be willing to ask questions, speak up, and disagree with "the expert" when necessary — sometimes (_many_ times), it's the "dumb" question (which is never dumb) that everyone is reluctant to ask (but everyone wants to!) that gets a discussion un-stuck and moving in a more productive direction.

Of course, within your passion, it's also important to display a spirit of humility and lack of ego when communicating your point of view — we're all trying our best, and NONE of us have a monopoly on knowledge or the "right" way to do anything!

TENSION & CONFLICT

HOW TO BE DRAMA-FREE

We believe most people would say they'd like to work in a drama-free work environment.

But what's not often recognized is the immense amount of work it takes to actually DO this.

In practice, being drama-free means that we over-communicate, we don't make assumptions, we separate "facts" from "stories," we keep ourselves out of the "drama triangle," and we stay on the Path of Possibilities.

It also means we pay REALLY close attention to when something is bugging us. You know that feeling when you're annoyed or even triggered? The one you usually ignore or "stuff down?" Well, we *don't* ignore that feeling. We CAN'T. Because far too often, those feelings get collected in some kind of dark, emotional pile where they grow and eventually come out — in the form of drama (or conflict).

So when you feel bugged, bothered, annoyed, triggered… speak up. Presence it. Make it known — directly to the person who's bugging you. And bring it up sooner than you think you should; don't ignore it.

It's not easy, but it's the way we stay drama-free.

EXPECT THINGS TO NOT WORK ALL THE TIME

This company, like all of us, is a work-in-progress. We <u>will</u> get things wrong and sometimes stuff just won't work the way we wanted it to or thought it would.

Save yourself some frustration and just *expect* mess-ups to happen, and expect apologies and improvements to follow.

We aren't perfect, but we *are* deeply committed to making this the most life-giving place you have ever worked, and we will always keep striving for that goal.

And as soon as you're a part of that "we," we'll expect you to help us do it, too!

HAVE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS FACE-TO-FACE

Sometimes we need to have conversations that aren't fun.

Do NOT do this on Slack, on email, or even over the phone. Get together in person if at all possible, or if you can't do that (because you live in different states), get on Zoom and, as difficult as it may be, keep your video on.

It's much harder to say hurtful things we'll regret later if we're talking face-to-face.

HELP PEOPLE BECOME THE BEST VERSION OF THEMSELVES

We believe organizations should be held to a higher calling: namely, that your place of work should help you become the very best version of you that you can be.

People who fit in our Tribe have a continual hunger to become both a better person and to get better at their craft.

We are also obsessed with helping the people around us shine. This means we are willing to have those difficult conversations with colleagues about Vital Behaviors and we share constructive feedback that other people won't. We tactfully challenge partners or potential customers when it's in *their* best interest (NOT just because we feel like we need to).

Is this always easy? No. But it's vitally important, because it shows how much we truly care about each other.

RESOLVE CONFLICTS HONORABLY

Conflicts happen when we work with other humans. We expect it—and even *welcome* the kind of helpful conflict that helps us arrive at the best idea!

We recognize that not all kinds of conflict are helpful, though, so when you experience a challenge with a colleague, here are the steps to resolve it:

1) Talk to the person directly, face-to-face. Get together and try to sort it out privately.

2) If the two of you can't find a solution that's agreeable to both, bring in a colleague you both trust to act as a mediator. The mediator doesn't impose a decision, but will help you come to your own solution.

3) If mediation fails, a panel of topic-relevant colleagues will be convened. Again the panel does not impose a solution, but helps you come to your own solution.

4) If the panel fails, everyone involved in the conflict process so far will be brought together to decide the best path forward.

5) If everything else fails (highly unlikely), the majority owner of the business (currently Josh) can be called in to make a decision.

TALK DIRECTLY TO THE PERSON YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

We've learned that "direct talk" is almost always the way to go.

Of course, be kind — AND tell people what you want to say, and be up front about what you mean.

Working without this kind of bold honesty damages trust and erodes psychological safety.

We understand that taking this approach involves a lot of bravery and courage (which admittedly comes more naturally to some people than others), but it's a skill we all need to build, no matter our energizers.

Also, this means we ALWAYS talk *directly to the person*.

To be clear: there's NO amount of "constructive side-talk" that is permissible.

Well, talking about someone's amazingness when they aren't present is fine, but anything else — truly, ANYTHING else — that resembles anything other than praise is simply unacceptable.

If we have anything "constructive" to say about a person, that person MUST be present. Every single time.*

This can feel difficult, too. But usually it means just shutting the conversation down when it goes that direction: *"Sorry, we need [Person's Name] to be here to talk about that."*

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*There's a nuanced exception to this that has to do with seeking advice or wisdom. Sometimes it is beneficial to talk with a colleague about *how to best approach a tough conversation* with another colleague. It's admittedly subtle, but we can FEEL when this turns into complaining or victimization/ villainization if we are paying attention. As long as the conversation stays laser-focused on working to find a constructive way to talk to the other person, this is acceptable.

HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS

OUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In a self-managing environment like ours, all stakeholders who will be impacted by a decision being made need to be *in the discussion about it* so they can lend their perspective, their strengths, their passion, and help sort it out.

This is a 2-step process:

1) **Explore possibilities, involving all stakeholders** — Include anyone who is affected by the decision you want to make in the discussion process (colleagues, vendors, partners, customers, etc.) and get input from all stakeholders.
2) **Decide** — The final decision-maker will be the person who has to MOST live with the decision being made.

PRACTICAL TIP: Have someone on the team with the appropriate strengths (Empathy, etc.) speak up as the "voice" of the customer or another stakeholder, if those people can't be physically present.

We know that this "advice process" sometimes involves a bit more thought and time than just "asking the boss," but it leads to much better decisions with more buy-in across the team, which is better for all of us.

And speaking of "asking the boss," you can and should do that here, too! Use our Noble Cause as the primary "filter" — *Will [whatever it is you're wanting to do] help create a world where everyone can love work?* If yes, you're probably on the right track!

MOVEMENT OVER PERFECTION

Our friend Chuck Blakeman has an anecdote he shares that we like very much. First, a question: "How do you turn a boat?" Most people think the answer is "The rudder!" (that's what we thought at first, too), but the actual answer is "Get the boat moving!"

You could be turning the rudder like crazy, but if you're anchored in the harbor you're <u>not going anywhere</u>!

So, get your boat moving and try something. We'll take movement over perfection any day.

PURPOSE DICTATES THE COURSE

Whenever you're challenged with a particularly thorny problem or challenge, "zoom out" and ask the question: "What's the *purpose* of what we're trying to do here?"

Seems simple, but you might be surprised how often it's overlooked. This quick question will almost certainly help you find the best path forward!

EXPLORE A THOUSAND WAYS TO <u>NOT</u> MAKE A LIGHT BULB

Because of our "Run The Experiment" VB, we don't really believe in "mistakes."

Instead, we believe in running experiments, giving something a "shot" from our latest and best thinking, learning from the things that don't go the way we thought they would, sharing our learnings with the team... and then running another experiment.

Thomas Edison reportedly said, *"I have not failed 1000 times. I have successfully discovered 1000 ways to NOT make a light bulb."* We can keep growing forever with this approach.

If you'd like to apply a jazz music analogy to this principle, **watch this video**, where Herbie Hancock talks about an experience he had onstage with Miles Davis.

IF YOU SEE A PROBLEM, GET IT FIXED

If you see a problem, it's now your job to fix it. (Congrats!)

That said, this doesn't mean that you *personally* have to fix it—quite frankly, you might not be the right person for the job. But it DOES mean you're now in charge of *tracking down* the right person for the job, getting them to see your point, and creating the buy-in needed to help solve it.

There's a quote attributed to Michelangelo we think applies here: *"Criticize by creating."* In other words, bring ideas and solutions instead of problems.

And consider there's a reason YOU saw the issue when everyone else missed it, and it's not because they're dumb *(Hint: your energizers! Others likely don't even <u>see</u> the problem you noticed. We all have different blind spots!)* so the team NEEDS you to take action to help correct it.

STOP WAITING

In many organizations, waiting for someone else so you can move forward is a commonplace occurrence (it's one of the things that makes traditional companies so inefficient).

Here, we have a *fanatical* bias for action. Use your best judgement (and the 2-step decision making process!) to help you know when to pull in others, of course... AND there are many cases when we can just make the call and keep our colleagues informed, giving them an opportunity to quickly jump in with objections if they have any.

CRAFTING YOUR JOB

DESIGN YOUR ROLE… AND DON'T EVER STOP DESIGNING

Over time, there will certainly be other tasks you find yourself working on that may not have been included in the initial list we outlined when you joined our team—don't shy away from this. Instead, *anticipate* for this to happen, and use it as an opportunity to design your dream job!

You have a tremendous amount of influence on how your role develops over time; in fact, you are *expected* to constantly explore and propose new and better ways to utilize your energizing strengths to accomplish our noble cause! You might call this "energy-based job crafting."

Think of it this way: by agreeing to work here, you have a personal obligation to share what you're learning about yourself, what energizes you, what doesn't, where you want to go next, and so on. Your personal commitments SHOULD change over time as you learn more about you. (Frankly, we'll be worried if you're NOT bringing these things up somewhat regularly.)

We look forward to seeing just how your role changes as the organization grows, as we all learn more about you, as you evolve, etc.

WHO'S THE LEADER?

You are… if you want to be! We believe that leadership is about *behavior*, not *position* — or put another way, *anyone who employs behaviors that are worth following is a leader*.

Some people mistakenly think that self-managing companies have a leadership vacuum, but it's actually the opposite — ALL of us are leaders in our particular areas of expertise and energy.

You'll see this play out all the time in our meetings: people will defer to Anissa's leadership on operational questions, go to Josh on matters of future planning, and talk to Pam about leadership and coaching.

Here, you are a leader because of your wisdom, your willingness, and how much value you create for the team in your area(s) of expertise.

Want to lead more? Great! We want you to, as well. Show us what you've got!

JOB DESCRIPTIONS ARE A WASTE OF TIME

In short: <u>we don't have them</u>. Other than when we outline ideas for a new colleague role, we've found that anything that even bears a slight resemblance to a traditional job description is mostly useless in the day-to-day functioning of work because our modern work-lives are just too complex, too quickly-changing, and too messy to fit in an archaic "job-description" box.

Our focus is on <u>results</u> and the <u>commitments</u> it takes to achieve those outcomes.

To do that, clarity is VITAL, so we will utilize many different tools to make sure the appropriate colleagues are clear about each person's commitments and everyone knows what their colleagues are expecting from them (ongoing and regularly-reviewed Commitments, our Yearly Plan, Freedom Maps, etc.)!

IT'S <u>YOUR</u> JOB TO GROW

If you see a course, a conference, an online class or something else that you think would help you be more effective at your work, please take a look at our current financial situation, bring it up to any impacted stakeholders, and if it seems feasible the company will do its best to make it a reality.

In other words, please take the initiative around creating self-improvement opportunities for yourself, because we love these things.

REGULATE YOUR OWN SCHEDULE

We trust you to regulate your own schedule.

What does this mean? Sometimes messages will get sent to you on the weekend or late at night. This is the blessing and the curse of flexible work and digital communication—we all work when we can.

Let's be explicitly clear: just because you've *received* a message does not necessarily mean you need to *respond to it*. There are occasions when you might want to do just that (use your judgement!), but many things can wait.

Remember, there's a general expectation for full-time colleagues to be available on Slack during U.S. business hours unless you've blocked your calendar and let the team know.

But overall, we are going to trust your good sense to know what your body needs; remember, it's one of our Vital Behaviors (#5) to be a whole person.

This means we need you to pay attention to when you feel you can respond and when you feel you can't. What are your boundaries, and when do you need a break? Are you communicating your boundaries to the team and not making people guess?

We all need different things, so be open about what you need... remember, our "boss" (our mission) says you MUST do this to keep us all loving OUR work!

IMPORTANT STUFF THAT DIDN'T QUITE FIT IN THE OTHER CATEGORIES

CREATE AN AMAZING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

"Work is love made visible." — Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Our mission, of course, is to help the world love work, and we have an opportunity to live this mission in every single conversation. At every interaction point with us, we have a chance to provide the person we're talking with an experience that work can be fun, meaningful, and energizing!

We aim to create the "Disney experience" of our field. Practically speaking, this means each of us takes an almost obsessive ownership of our commitments.

From end-to-end, in every intersection with another human, remember that love is at the core of what we do.

NO TIME FOR HATERS

We go where we're invited. We bloom where we are planted. We don't try to "convert" people.

There are plenty of haters out there who frankly aren't terribly interested in believing in a better future — we offer those people our love and then we move on... quickly.

We spend our time and energy with the open-minded and curious; those are the ones who will help create the kind of future we actually want to live in.

OUR DIFFERENCES MAKE US POWERFUL

As humans, we are all equal in the sense that we all deserve equal dignity, respect, and love simply because we are humans.

Beyond that, though, we see that it's our inherent *differences* that make collaboration powerful and teams necessary.

All voices are welcome here, and we will do our absolute best to craft a workplace that is inclusive, diverse, understanding, and loving.

If you want a bit more on these topics, we recommend reading **this** and **this** by Josh.

STRIVE FOR SIMPLICITY

We have an unrelenting passion and drive to find the most simple and beautiful incarnation of whatever we are working on.

We believe that if you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it well enough.

Practically speaking, this means everyone on the team should be able to explain what the company does in one short, compelling sentence.

Simplicity applies to everything, though — it applies to the way we teach, the materials we produce, and the way we run our finances. (On that note specifically, we intentionally run lean, and we're always on the lookout for creative ways to save money while still creating the best possible experience for our partners/customers!)

So, whatever you're working on, make it as simple as possible, and no simpler.

YOU ARE NOT AN EMPLOYEE

We don't have employees here.

We are colleagues, team members, stakeholders, but never "employees."

Why?

The origins of the word 'employee' are associated with being stupid and lazy.

We probably don't have to tell you, but you are the *opposite* of stupid and lazy. Your gifts, talents, and unique strengths are <u>powerful</u> — and we believe you can do even more than you think you can!

We believe people are fundamentally good and want to do great work.

We can't "empower" other people because they already ARE powerful.

This is a place for you to discover your voice and use it with strength; something an 'employee' could never do.

IF YOU LEAVE...

If you leave your position, either temporarily like for a long weekend or a long-term vacation or hiatus (good for you, by the way — we like the idea of "retiring a little!") or if you leave our team for good (we've loved having you with us!), we ask one thing:

Please, as a courtesy to both your colleagues and our customers, take responsibility as part of your exit plan to pass off all your active, crucial activities to other colleagues before you leave.

This ensures we don't "drop the ball" with the customers we are trying to help in your absence.

Also, particularly if it's a long-term break, please contact any active customers and let them know who on the team will be assuming your responsibilities. It's just the courteous thing to do!