

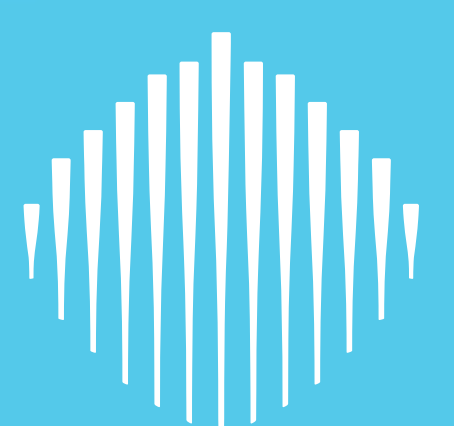
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OP-ED

Fit For Purpose:
**The new leadership
model we need today**

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The past few years have taught us all that some things are simply beyond our control. But lingering economic and geopolitical turmoil have also shown us the importance of focusing on those things that we do have the power to influence—and for leaders, that starts with the culture of our organizations.

The old-school authoritarian style of leadership—marked by one-way communication from the top down—no longer cuts it. **Instead, a redefined values-based leadership model is emerging, and the focus is firmly on listening, applying, and sharing, rather than simply on talking and decision-making.**

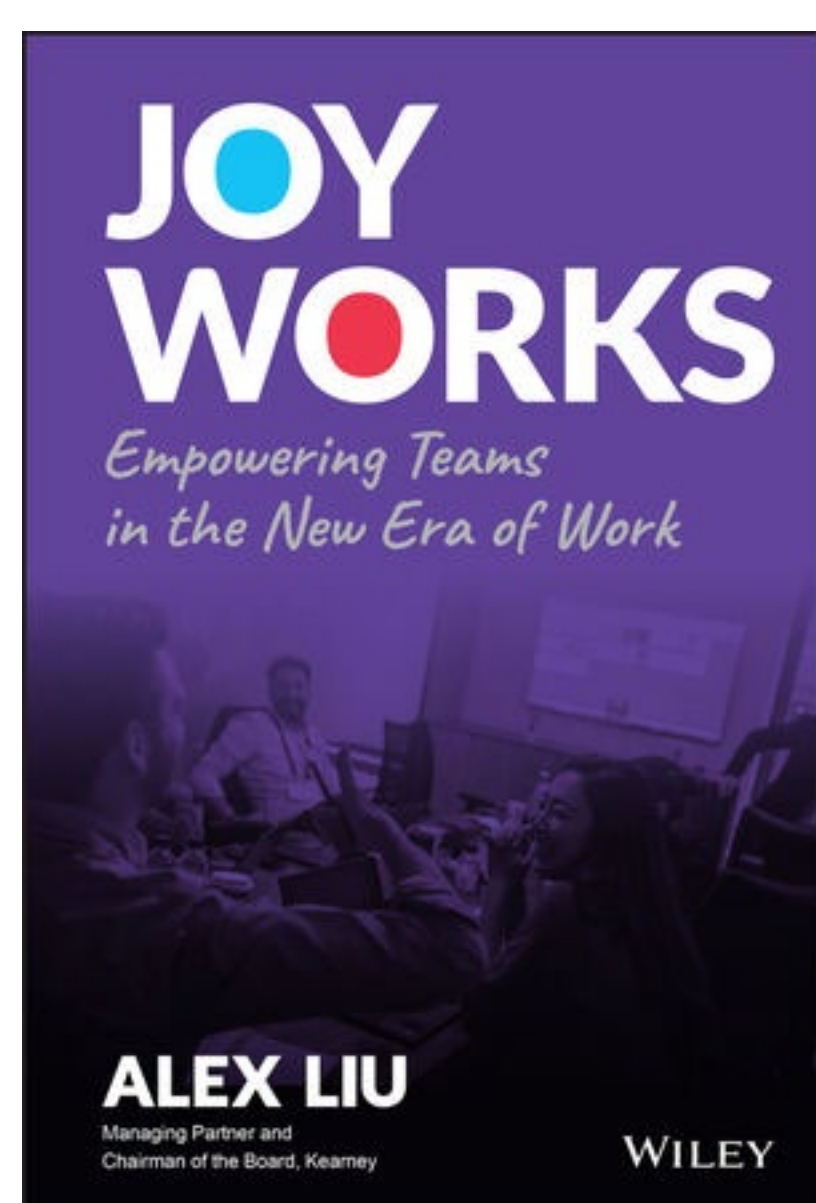


Today, our role as leaders needs to be on fostering allyship, belonging, and culture among our employees—creating a supportive environment that makes them feel empowered to bring their whole selves to work. **To achieve that, we need to start by simplifying—stripping away all the metrics that are clouding the true purpose of our organizations and empowering our people with the tools to drive real change.**

At the top of our organizations, we're busy making pledges, issuing mission statements, and setting metrics: but for the newer generations coming in through the doors, we can't be bold enough fast enough. This surging generational momentum for change is creating a bottleneck, where the middle of the organization—which stands to lose the most from change—is now being compelled to take risks and come up with creative solutions that will shape the future.



So how can we harness that momentum? The key lies in one of the most powerful emotions that we can experience as humans: joy. We want our employees to feel like they belong to an organization that has a higher purpose, but we also want them to be part of a workplace where they can find genuine joy in their roles.



This is a topic that I explore at length in my book, *Joy Works: Empowering Teams in the New Era of Work*, because it really matters: **we know that happy employees who find true joy and purpose in their work have a strong sense of responsibility, ownership, and accountability—and that means they will do the right thing for customers and suppliers.**

Back in 2018, long before the pandemic had shaken up the way we think about the workplace, we took a closer look at the issue of joy at work through a survey of more than 500 executives across the globe, supplemented by many one-on-one executive discussions and four years of podcasts.

Their responses revealed that while nearly 90% of them expect to experience a substantial degree of joy at work, only 37% actually experience it. When we repeated the survey just three years later, this stark “joy gap” had opened up even further, widening from 53% to 61%.



The ancient Japanese concept of “ikigai” can offer us all a powerful way to discover what really makes us tick at work. Ikigai is all about finding the right balance between four important dimensions: our passions, what we get paid for, what the world needs, and what we’re good at.

If we as leaders can promote and honor this balance among our people, we can not only pay them what they deserve and offer them much greater flexibility in their careers; we can also ensure that we are working with a strong purpose and hiring and nurturing people who are truly passionate about what they do.

When it comes to work, the real key is to love what we do, and do what we love. So make closing that joy gap a priority for your organization. As a leader, why would you settle for anything less?



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