

## Book Review

### **The Healthy Workplace Nudge by Rex Miller, Phillip Williams & Michael O'Neill, Wiley USA, 2018, Pages: 296, Price: \$ 32.00**

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The Healthy Workplace Nudge, as the authors claim is a hands-on guide for creating a healthy environment where employees and organization can thrive. Work is a stress inducer and this stress can result in chronic diseases. The rise in the rate of chronic diseases is adversely affecting the performance of organizations. The problem lies in the way in which the majority of organizations deliver their wellness programs which are not at all successful in improving the lives of employees who work for them. In this book authors, on the basis of their study on 100 large organizations, discuss why some organizations have been able to tackle the problem of employee health and the cost associated with it. The book is filled with examples through which one can have the insight in to development strategies and approaches for improving workplace conditions. In a nutshell, this book is about creating cultures of care.

The book has been divided into four parts. Part I, II and III have four chapters while the last part has five chapters. Part I of the book has been named as 'Slow Moving Storm: A History of Warnings and Apathy'. In chapter 1, the authors build the background for the

coming chapters by explaining the huge problem which is lurking on our heads. To understand the problem, the authors being novice in the area, takes help of Michael Roizen, Chief Wellness Officer, Cleveland Clinic and Mark Benden, Department Head and Director of Ergonomics Centre at Texas A & M. Chapter 2 of the book has been titled as 'The Rainbow in the Storm: Medical Science Meets Building Science'. This chapter begins with Lehman Brother's collapse crisis and spiraling of world economies. The market correction which took place after the collapse demanded a total rethinking which will lead to team-based, egalitarian workplaces. It was after this crisis that the concept of workplace as an instrument of wellness was taken seriously by industry leaders. Now bettering human lives was seen as the high return investment. Chapter 3 is titled as 'Storm Damage: The Cost of Forgetting'. In this chapter the authors, through stories of Dale and Craig, tell how they pushed chaos back and established buffers that provide safe havens for employees. Dale alleviated intense schedule and the stress of working in a reactive mode. Whereas, Craig produced a harmony among employees by preferring peace of mind

overpay fluctuations and job security. 'Stress: The Portrait of a Killer' is the fourth chapter of this part. Stress is the serial killer behind all mortal afflictions. Well-being requires a mind shift, not a new program.

Part II of the book has been titled as 'Is There Shelter from The Storm? A Search for Wellness. Chapter 5 and first chapter of part II have been titled In Search of Wholeness'. In this chapter at Mayo Clinic, authors examine the difference between wellness and wellbeing. In this chapter they also answer the question 'what does it mean to be human at work'. While answering the question PREMA model is discussed and a ladder to wellness is also built in this chapter. Why happiness before health, is chapter 6 of the book where the authors also look for the answer. The 90-minute rule is proposed in this chapter as brain fatigues after 90 minutes of focused work. Further, it is mentioned that an engaged mind is a happy mind. For increasing engagement, a frictionless environment needs to be created. Chapter 7 of the book has been titled as 'Where's the Data: Inconvenient Truths'. In this chapter the authors make a point that wellness has become a culture of belief that defies data and common sense. The question raised over here is how to get to reality. Several success stories have been narrated to drive home the point. The mystery of hospitality: experiencing the human touch forms the last chapter of part II of the book. In this chapter, one of the authors shares his own experience of writing this book and says it was different from the books written by him in the past.

Authors' raise several pertinent questions like when a workplace cares, does anyone here care, it's about being human, can the workplace be restorative and the power of hospitality. To create a great workplace good for people requires active and engaged leaders. It is the leader who makes the difference; a well written and designed program has no meaning without a good leader.

'Magical Nudges: The Road to Health and Well-being' is part III of the book. The first chapter of this part has been titled 'Nudge Thinking: How Small Things Lead to Big Results'. The authors begin by explaining the meaning and importance of Nudge. Nudge is seen as positive reinforcement or the gentle suggestion which shifts people in the desired direction. The essence is to uncover constraints and experimenting with different nudges so that tipping points of acceptance and adoption are discovered. Chapter 10 of the book which is the second chapter in part III has been titled as 'the Healthy Building Nudge: The Invisible Power of the Workplace'. For creating a culture of happiness and health it is necessary to build an ecosystem that supports the leader's conviction, commitment and congruence. A way to lift the health and wellbeing of employees is to invest in a place where they spend most of the time. The best way to unlock employee potential is through buildings. Chapter 11 of the book has been titled as 'the Financial Nudge: The Return of Humans'. In this chapter the authors are of the view that some companies like Apple, Google and Facebook have a different understanding of talent. They see them as an

asset to leverage, not as a cost to contain. 'Becoming Your Best Self: Rest, Engagement, Boundaries and Deep Work' is the chapter 12. Pushing limits is ingrained in our culture and we do not seem to notice it. All humans are prone to overdo exertion, ignore common sense and fail to recognize signs of fatigue. The cost of overstraining is not visible until the breaking point. From the stage of strain, recovery is necessary. Understanding of stress-work-life connection is vital for transformation. For recovery from strain, one of the authors shares his experience of using WHOOP band.

'Haven in a Heartless World: The Need for Safe Places' is part four of the book. It starts with the chapter 'How They Did It: Creating Ecosystems of Care'. This chapter covers success stories of companies like the Cleveland Clinic, Barry-Wehmler, Tom Emerick, Ron Goetzl and J & J. These companies took different roads to reach their goals but kept the focus on simple attitudes and practices. Each understood the intricacies of its system and nudge their path to success. Chapter 14 is on 'Courageous Leaders and a Culture of Care'. The chapter starts with a quote of Rex Miller; "Culture is what happens when you're not there". This quote aptly describes the chapter and tells what kind of culture needs to be developed. Through success stories of various companies' authors have described the need for and type of culture to be developed for making a caring organization. 'The Meteor Story: Extreme Ownership' is the next chapter of the book. In this chapter, taking meteor education, a consulting or-

ganization, as an example, the authors try to drive home the concept of extreme ownership by building a culture to support the company to reach its goals. Chapter 16 of the book is titled 'Starting a Movement: How Second-chair Leadership Can Change a Company'. As the title of the chapter suggests this chapter is focused on the second-chair leadership. According to the authors, second-chair leadership needs to come out of the comfort zone to challenge conventional thinking. Second chair leaders must work as an artisan, crafting social capital in ways that first chair leaders cannot. The final chapter of the book is titled as 'Haven in a Heartless World: The Promise of a Good Workplace'. In this chapter, the authors make a point that every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. Workplaces are perfectly designed to produce disengagement, stress, toxicity and chronic diseases. To design a modern better workplace inclined towards the wellness of employees' convergence of new tools, new languages and new thinking is required.

This is a good book to read as it is based on an in-depth study of the subject of healthy workplace. Through this book, the authors have challenged the way companies deliver their wellness program to employees. According to them, the wellness program offered by organizations is a waste of money as they are reactive and do not stop diseases from occurring. A new wellness program which the authors recommend is proactive. It will prevent the diseases from occurring instead of treating the diseases once it has occurred. The reading of this

book provides a path-breaking insight into the subject and will definitely result in a change of mind-set. The book is full of examples from several industries and case studies of organizations where leaders have stood apart from the crowd and gone against the trend to create an environment of care for its employees. From these examples and case studies practitioners can learn to create new pathways

and approaches for their organizations. The book is also of interest to scholars and researchers as it provides a new perspective to ponder over.

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