

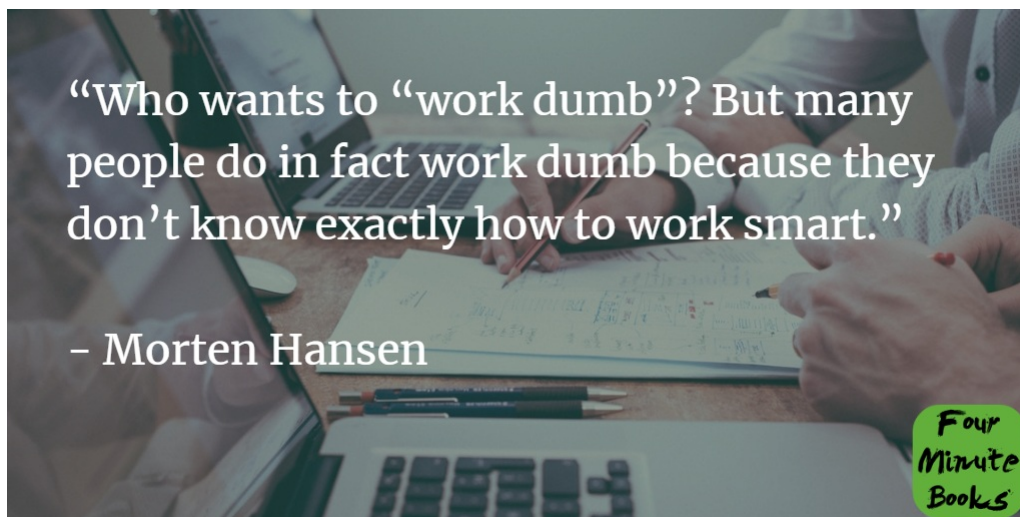
Great At Work Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Great At Work* examines what it takes to be a top performer and gives practical advice to achieve significant results at work while also maintaining an excellent work-life balance.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Morten Hansen is one of the authors of Great By Choice, the result of a 9-year study on what makes companies great. But, after writing that, he still had a question on his mind: why do some individuals perform better than others?

He recruited a team and launched one of the biggest research projects on individual performance at work ever. They collected tons of data about how people work and what results they get, then analyzed it statistically.

The group found that seven “work smart” practices account for high performance at work. They then organized the results into a validated framework that anybody can use.

In Great At Work: How Top Performers Work Less and Achieve More, Hansen explains these seven principles, with examples from the lives of the 5,000 people that he and his team analyzed. He also suggests you think of it as “a complement to Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, updated to reflect the realities of work today.”

Here are 3 lessons that I’m trying to implement in my work:

1. You don’t need to be stressed out to do great; you can be successful and also

experience work-life balance.

2. To perform well, doing what you love is not enough; combine your passion with purpose and constant learning.
3. If you want to master working with others, be selective about collaborations and manage meetings with the “fight and unite” approach.

Would you like to improve your results while reducing your stress? Let’s find out how you can do it!

Lesson 1: Being successful doesn’t imply working overtime and risking burnout.

Many of us believe the key to success is working hard and putting in long hours day after day. After he graduated, Morten Hansen was one of these people.

For some years he worked 60-90 hours per week and neglected his private life and health. That was until he discovered his teammate Nathalie had better results than him and never left the office after 6 p.m. or worked on weekends.

Despite Hansen’s experience, the overworked, stressed-out, high-achiever paradigm is still a stereotype often portrayed in movies. These individuals neglect their personal concerns for business interests. **However, Hansen’s research shows that you don’t have to voluntarily give up your time away from work to get great results.** You can do it while maintaining work-life balance!

His team discovered that the main feature of top performers is selectivity. While most productivity experts suggest prioritizing, Hansen goes beyond. If you want to excel, he says, you need to evaluate carefully which activities are worth your time.

Top performers apply the “do less, then obsess” principle. They are very selective about goals, ideas, and collaborations. Once they have chosen to undertake a specific project, they commit to producing high-quality work.

As the author says:

“to work smart means to maximize the value of your work by selecting a few activities and applying intense targeted effort.”

Lesson 2: Do what you love with purpose, even if it means redesigning your work, and never stop learning.

Hansen’s research has brought some unexpected findings.

A popular assumption is that you can achieve greatness only by doing what you love. The author even confirms that people passionate about their jobs are more likely to perform better.

But fascination alone doesn't suffice. **Only people who adopt the "P-squared approach" and match passion with purpose do perform great.**

We need to feel useful. We can do our best only if we find a role that provides value to other people, thus experiencing satisfaction and well-being at work. The very best performers in the study rethought their work to create the most value. Some designed new roles for themselves, while others launched a new business inside their current company.

Morten Hansen has also questioned the popular idea that you need to practice for 10,000 hours to master a skill. He says that's not what top performers do. The best way to become smarter while working is to apply the "learning loop." Regularly ask for feedback about what you do and use it to fine-tune your processes.

Never give up learning while working! Even if you need to accomplish the same activities every day, explore new ways of doing them. This is the "*Quality learning*" principle: avoid mindless repetitions to keep improving your skills.

Lesson 3: Collaborate only when useful and hold effective meetings using the "Fight and unite" method.

We consider collaboration to be efficient, and we often think the more, the better. Experts advise organizations to eliminate silos, build networks, and use lots of high-tech communication tools.

But top performers collaborate less, not more. They do work together only if it provides value to the projects of themselves and their potential associates. Otherwise, they save time and energy for more productive activities.

What about when you need to utilize a team? How can you manage meetings to get the most from them? Top performers suggest that you carefully analyze if a meeting is really necessary before organizing one. If it is, be sure that time together provides the highest value using the "fight and unite" approach.

To be effective, you need to get your team to debate. People must feel allowed to speak their mind. Confrontation is essential for the most innovative ideas to emerge and for sound decision making. Debating requires different points of view, so you'll have the best results if you bring together people with more diverse backgrounds and mindsets.

You also need to ask specific questions to get your teammates to express themselves freely. Rather than “Do we have any new ideas?” ask: “What can we do to improve this service?” Despite contrary opinions, the team must unite. Make sure each member commits to implementing the decision-making process and to respecting whatever choices the team leader will make.

Great At Work Review

Do you want to achieve great results without getting stressed out? I do, and I think *Great At Work* is a useful place to begin. Here, Morten Hansen explains the best smart practices he learned by observing many top performers and also offers concrete advice for us to apply them in our work.

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Who would I recommend the Great At Work summary to?

The 24-year-old who is ready to put in long hours to make a career, the 35-year-old exhausted entrepreneur with no free time, and anybody who wants to excel in her job without renouncing her private life.