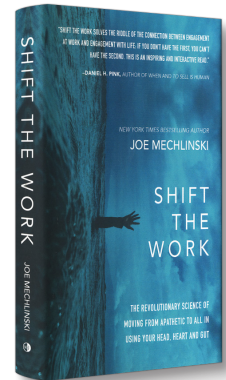


Shift the Work

The Revolutionary Science of Moving from Apathetic to All In Using Your Head, Heart and Gut

by **Joe Mechlinski**



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The Summary In Brief

How can businesses expect to thrive if close to three-quarters of the workforce shows no passion—or even interest—for the work? And, if we aren't ALL IN at work, how can we expect to be ALL IN at home and in our personal lives?

Shift the Work explores the emerging science around each of our three brains—our head brain, our heart brain, and our gut brain. As we understand ourselves as a whole, we can move away from a work world that is designed solely to meet the needs of the brain in our head. Each part of the book offers a new perspective on work as well as exercises to reconstruct your thinking about the workplace.

Author Joe Mechlinski draws from personal experience, stories from businesses, and the latest in neuroscience to bring us hope about the future of the workplace. We do not have to accept a 70 percent disengaged workforce as a fact of life. Applying these ideas can help you improve your attitudes about work. You can become a leader in improving workplace engagement and the personal lives of those you influence.

In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- How to embrace gratitude through a shift in language.
- To read the signals sent by your three brains—head, heart, and gut.
- To recognize purpose in work as more meaningful than money.
- Ways to elevate relationships as a workplace motivator.

Work On Purpose

Recent discoveries in neuroscience reveal that at every moment, your body's neural network, which connects the brains in your head, heart, and gut, is sending signals about what it finds helpful or harmful. People claim, "I don't live to work; I work to live." The statement ignores the fact that people spend a majority of their waking day at work.

Change Your Language, Change Your Life

Working on purpose begins with a change in attitude. You may think that starts with the heart, but change can begin with head-driven action. Change the way you talk about your life. Try phrases such as these: I don't *have* to be with the people I love. I *get* to be with them. I *get* to bathe my children. These obligations toward loved ones are opportunities to hug them a little tighter and deepen the bond. Take the same approach with work obligations: I get to answer email. I get to have a client meeting. Small changes reconnect you to your priorities, passion, and purpose. They empower you to shift your work.

Adopt an Attitude of Gratitude

High levels of serotonin, the neurotransmitter that regulates feelings of happiness, are released from the gut when people express gratitude or perform acts of generosity. Our language has a biological impact. Studies have shown that the more we practice gratitude, whether through journal writing or sending thank-you cards, the more thankful we will feel months later.

Gratefulness can cause you to turn off your phone at night and spend quality time with the significant people in your life. This attitude drives you to treat the smallest clients the same as the largest accounts, grateful and humbled that they selected your company over all the others.

Every morning, write in a journal three things you are grateful for, three things that would make the day great, and an affirmation of how you see yourself. The *five-minute journal* is an excellent tool to enhance your optimism and to build stronger relationships. At the end of the day, list three amazing things that happened, and one way the day could have been better. Articulating your dreams and desires has the power to make them reality.

Know With Your Head

We readily acknowledge the brain in the head. It's where synapses, electrical impulses, and hormones talk to each

other, which is what allows for consciousness and awareness. Most importantly, it's what gives us the ability to identify patterns and make sense of the world.

Use Your Brain to Set Your Priorities

Think of your day as an airline flight, and you are the captain. Most of us wake up in the morning and take off as quickly as possible. We shower and dress, and eat a bagel in the car, or grab a coffee on the way. This is the equivalent of taking off and waiting until you're in the air to think about a flight plan. Forget preparing for a meeting. We're lucky if we manage to show up on time. As the pilot, take control. Examine every instrument before takeoff to make sure it's in good working order. Identify the destination before the plane speeds down the runway.

Every moment is an opportunity to execute your vision. Don't waste it on what came before, or let it pass you by because you're too fixated on what comes after. Throughout the day, constantly do everything possible to stay in the moment.

Use Your Brain to Know and Explore Your Path

Workers are like drivers heading down a dark road, and the company's values and mission are the headlights that show us the path. Even if the headlights are only strong enough to show us what's fifteen feet ahead, we still feel confident continuing down the road because we have faith that the company's mission will keep guiding us through the darkness. To have any chance at engaging the head brain, we need clear vision and mission. We must feel that we are provided with the space to use our frontal cortices to innovate in our jobs.

A deli in Michigan has what they call their "Three Bottom Lines." They are great food, great service, and great finance. Every worker is supplied with detailed information about the company's finances. This effort at educating the workforce treats everyone like adults and partners in the mission. Employees who know the profits and losses connected to their specific job are more likely to innovate. In this environment, the person who cleans the trays is more likely to bring up how customers throw out a lot of unused napkins and ketchup packets.

What gets you up in the morning? What keeps you awake at night? Schedule one hour in your day to sit comfortably and think. No smartphone. No laptop. No conversations. Quietly spend time with the thoughts in your head brain.

Engaging the brain in the head allows us to process information, notice patterns, and take away blind spots that

Annie O'Dell exuded passion. She stood out for having a unique point of view, one that was shaped by her connection with the brain in her heart.

prevent us from seeing a different future. Once engaged, we can begin innovating at work and in our own lives.

Own With Your Heart

The brain in the head has us checking off boxes, keeping us on a path, and sticking to a process. The brain in the heart allows us to experience the moment and connect to our actions in an emotional way. When we face adversity and aren't feeling great about our direction, it's the heart that steers us and decides whether the commitment is worth it.

The brain sends orders to the heart, but the heart also sends orders back to the brain. Research shows how signals sent from the heart impact our attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving. It's why we tell people to take a deep breath before they decide on the next step to take.

When making decisions, we are cautioned not to let feelings get in the way, as if emotional choices have less value. A major function of the heart is to regulate blood pressure, which will rise with passion, excitement, or stress, and may fall with feelings of depression. We know something in the head, but we own it in the heart. The term "speaking from the heart" implies that what is being said has authenticity.

The head can devise all sorts of strategies for putting you in front of an audience, but it depends on the heart brain to make the connection.

The head brain will notice if the person standing across from you is happy, but it's only once the heart brain receives the message that it releases the oxytocin and pumps the blood at a faster rate. It will change your voice and the way the muscles in your face move. The person standing across from you will observe and absorb these changes.

Working from the Heart Releases Passion

The level of passion speaks to the question of whether you own what you do in your heart. Does your belief in the company make you want to do a great job at work, or

are you completely indifferent to the company's success? A group of employees was surveyed in order to learn whether, if knowing what they now know, would they accept the job again if offered it today—72 percent answered in the affirmative. This sounds high, but is it really? Would you go to a restaurant if a quarter of the diners said they'd never come back? Not every task we are asked to do at work is glamorous or fulfilling, but if we believe in the overall mission, we are willing to accept the tasks as part of the job.

Motion Creates Emotion

Annie O'Dell exuded passion. She stood out for having a unique point of view, one that was shaped by her connection with the brain in her heart. Annie noticed that in company meetings, everyone was dividing their attention between the proceedings and their phones. She took a trash can, covered it with green felt, decorated the lid like a frog face, and called it Kevin. As a new rule moving forward, everyone would deposit his or her phone into Kevin at the start of meetings. She had this natural ability to light people up, whether it was her colleagues, clients, friends, or strangers.

The heart brain is about inspiration and ownership. It is an energy field. Working from the heart takes practice. If we want to connect with people, we need to stand where they are standing, to see the world through their hearts.

Take your eyes off yourself and consider what it means to walk in the shoes of a co-worker. Own their place for a moment to see what it will take to encourage enthusiasm and excitement in your workplace.

Drive With Your Gut

Empathy is a drug. It releases dopamine in the brain, oxytocin in the heart, and serotonin in the gut. This biochemical reaction is the body's way of connecting us to the greater good and prompting us to act on that feeling. It's the body's way of asking, "What are you going to do about this situation?"

The brain in your gut regulates your serotonin level, which dictates your mood and behavior. Intuition, inspiration, and sixth sense refer to sensations from the gut. The gut produces 70 percent of the stress hormone, cortisol. It does more than turn our stomachs at anxious moments. The gut brain is responsible for processing information during sleep. Seventy percent of serotonin—the neurotransmitter responsible for relaying signals across the brain to help us think clearer—is produced in the gut. The gut is also responsible for 90 percent of our immune system, keeping you healthy!

Having the Guts to Lean In

When we talk about finding greater purpose, we are talking about the gut intelligence center. When we are faced with a crucial decision, and we appeal to our intuition, we feel a tightening in our stomachs. Those butterflies-in-your-stomach feelings before giving a big talk, sitting down to an interview for a dream job, or walking down the marriage aisle is the gut brain's way of talking to us and telling us what's important. It is directing us towards purpose.

Guts for Purpose and Principles

Harley Davidson struggled mightily back in the early 1980s when Japan's manufacturing took the upper hand. After several buyouts, the company was down to a 15 percent share of the marketplace. A new CEO took over, and the first thing he did was leave his office for an extended period. He traveled the country, visiting dealerships and hosting Harley-sponsored road rallies, which brought thousands of bikers together to celebrate Harley Davidson. This new strategy was about reconnecting customers and dealers to this product. His idea was that Harley riders thought of the motorcycle as more than a bike. They thought of it as a community, one that is based on principles of patriotism

and the independent spirit. In less than fifteen years, market share has climbed to 85 percent.

The gut brain is about impact and greater good. Want to consider your purpose? Take a moment to write your obituary. What would you like people to say about the path you took?

Shift to Make it Work

It's time to shift our thinking from dogma to data, from story to science, as we seek purposeful engagement with work. When we care for ourselves enough to transform our work, we take the crucial step in beginning to properly care for others and our planet.

The business world clings to the fallacy that money is the chief concern of workers when survey after survey refutes this claim. Feeling there is no room to grow, poor leadership, a desire for a better work culture, and a wish for more challenging work are the top four reasons people leave their jobs; better pay and recognition at work are reasons five and six.

The diagnosis is clear. More than two-thirds of the workforce is not engaged, and unless we begin listening to the three brains in our bodies, we will fail at finding the greater purpose to shift these numbers.

The science tells us we can integrate our head, heart, and gut into the work world by thinking a deliberate way, using certain words, and creating habits and patterns of behavior. If we can use the three brains to become fully engaged for the eight hours a day we spend at work, if we can generate passion and purpose and establish constructive patterns, then we'll return home as better spouses, parents, children, and citizens. This is how we'll get rid of the current apathy and workers across the country can say, "Yes, what I'm doing is worth it!"



Joe Mechlini is a *New York Times* bestselling author, speaker, and entrepreneur who believes that an engaged workforce is the key to unlocking human potential. To transform the purpose of business, Joe founded SHIFT, a collective of businesses spanning consulting, executive membership, and venture capitalism. All focus on one idea: Better you. Better us. Better all.

Joe's podcast, *Shift Happens*, features inspiring guests such as *New York Times* bestselling authors Dan Pink and Tucker Max.

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