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# Four Ways to Create a Better Workplace

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By Jennifer Robin and Michael Burchell



From left: Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda in 'Nine to Five' — 20th Century Fox/Everett

In our book, "No Excuses: How You Can Turn Any Workplace Into a Great One," we address one of the most common — time. While we sympathize with working managers who are held accountable for an individual contributor's workload *in addition to* people-management responsibilities, we know from our interviews and first-hand experiences with great workplace managers that time is simply not an

excuse.

Rather, these managers understand that building a great workplace environment is not about what they do — the initiatives, the projects, the decisions. Rather, strong workplace cultures are the result of consistently choosing a means to those ends that attends to three fundamental relationships. Those are **trust** (the relationship with one's manager), **pride** (the relationship with one's job), and **camaraderie** (the relationship between employees).

Great workplace managers are no less busy than you, but their investment in relationships pays dividends when employees are more receptive to change, willing to extend the benefit of the doubt, and ready to give extra when needed to get the job done. How much time can you spare if that time investments result in such positive outcomes?

### If you have one minute:

Craft a meaningful note of thanks to a team member, outlining not only an aspect of their performance for which you are grateful, but also why it is a result of their unique strengths and talents. That builds a sense of respect. In 30 additional seconds, you can build pride by telling them why their good work matters for their fellow employees, clients, the community, and maybe even the world.

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### If you have 10 minutes:

Bring your new employees on board before they arrive. Call them the day before their report date to make sure they know where to park, what to wear, and who will meet them at the door. That warm welcome builds camaraderie. If you have an extra five minutes, be sure to tell your team about their new co-worker, which magnifies the welcome while building your credibility for making such a good hire.

### If you have one hour:

Invite someone from another department to visit one of your staff meetings in order to tell your work group about his role in the organization and how your work group's efforts help him do his job better. You'll not only help your work group see how their contributions make a difference and build pride, but you model fairness by sending the implicit message that everyone's role matters in accomplishing organizational goals.

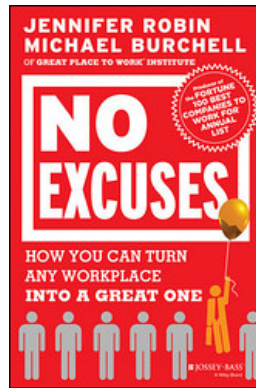
### If you have one day:

Put your employees face-to-face with the beneficiaries of your organization's work, even if those beneficiaries are not the people who pay you for goods and services. Visit sites constructed using equipment that your company manufactures, schools that use your broadband services, or a playground that your employees funded. If getting out is difficult, open your doors. Bring patients to the hospital to talk about the care they received, loyal customers to the store for a celebration, or clients to the office for a tour. Doing so builds employees' pride, and also increases camaraderie in the conversations that happen as a result.

Challenge yourself to think of ways you can creatively use small bits of time to build your workplace relationships. Sometimes that time is already scheduled, like your staff meeting. *How* you use that time makes all the difference. Other times, think of your choices as investments. A 10-minute phone call might pay off several times over when it comes to that employee's commitment and loyalty to the organization.

Last but not least, ban "I don't have time" from your vocabulary, especially when it comes to creating a great workplace. Every manager has the same amount of time as you. Great managers use it to build trust, pride, and camaraderie every step of the way.

*Jennifer Robin and Michael Burchell are the authors of "NO EXCUSES: How You can Turn Any Workplace Into a Great One."*



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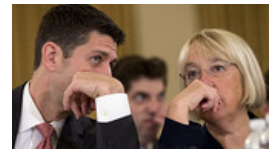
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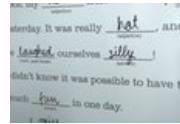
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