

Human Insight

Excellence Is Sustainable

It's a Wednesday night, 9:00 PM. Long past the workday ended, and Slack messages are still coming through. Not only are they coming through, but they're being answered. Because why should there be boundaries in work anymore? Things need to get done no matter when or where, right?

We've mistaken exhaustion for excellence.

We say we are performing this way so we might be able to enjoy that thing called "life" eventually. But we structure our lives in a way where we don't even have time to enjoy the things we want, or even the things we need.

I've seen this type of worker my entire life. I grew up seeing it in my home. And then I saw that person in the mirror.

The funny thing is, I never wanted to become that.

I admire my mom. She passed down an ethereal work ethic. But I've seen what it does to a family. It's making excuses for working instead of eating dinner together, or half-listening to a conversation while answering emails.

It's unsustainable.

I realized I was building a life I didn't actually want. Like many others, I was allowing work to become everything, a relentless pursuit of excellence. I let outcomes define who I was, forgetting that I am made up of so much more than what I do for a living, or how much I sacrifice to get there.

After all, excellence isn't measured by how much you exhaust yourself to get there, or how much you're willing to give up.

Excellence is sustainable. It strengthens your work without slowly eroding your life.

And sometimes, it looks like closing the laptop at 6:00 PM and being fully present at the dinner table.