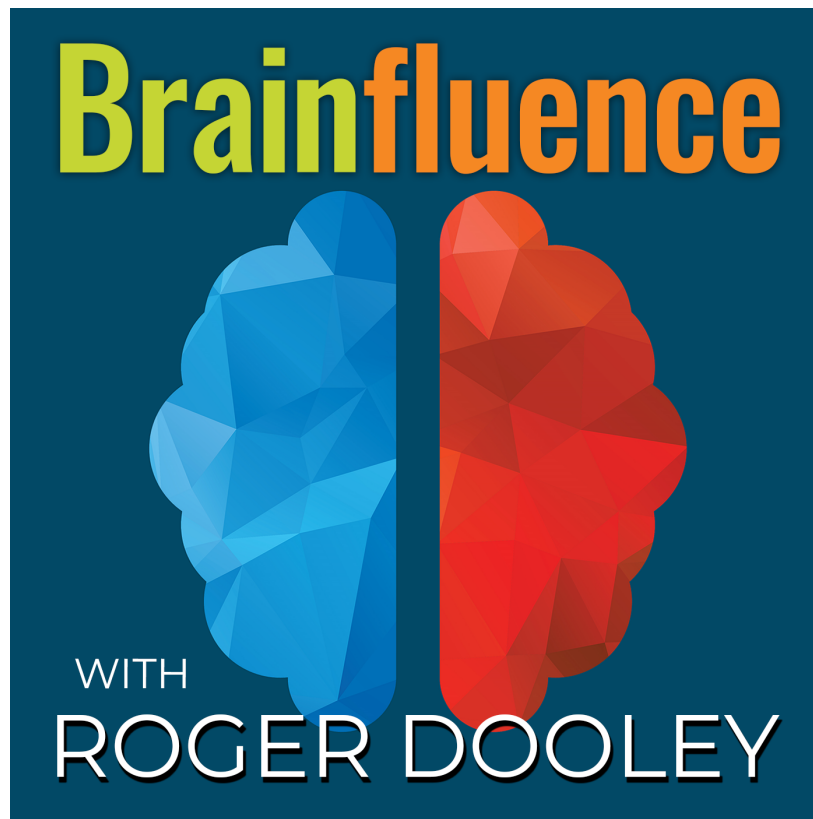


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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

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Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley. I've known today's guest virtually for a while, and I'm excited to finally have him on the show. David Burkus is the bestselling author of four award-winning books about business and leadership. His ideas have been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, USA Today, Fast Company, and many other media outlets. His Ted Talk has over 2 million views and he's worked with brands like Google, Striker, Fidelity, and even the US Naval Academy. His new book is *Leading From Anywhere: The Essential Guide To Managing Remote Teams*. Welcome to the show, David.

David Burkus: Oh, thank you so much for having me.

Roger Dooley: This is really a timely book. I think so many of us are wrestling with these issues right now. But first I want to

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ask you a question, your bio lists you as having been a professor for a while, explain that and explain how you transitioned into being an author and thought leader.

David Burkus: Well, the unknown part of my story is that the author part came first, at least in terms of aspirations. So I went to undergraduate university wanting to be a writer. I studied English and creative writing. When you're 19 years old, you think that means I wanted to be a novelist, right? And the grand existential crisis is, do I do trade fiction, like Jack Reacher novels, or I try and be Jack Kerouac and do literary. And during my time there, we had to take a couple of courses in non-fiction, narrative non-fiction, long-form journalism, a bunch of other stuff, and that as a medium, I thought was really, really interesting. I got to read some of the early science writers or the anthologies, like best American science writing.

And I thought it was fascinating when people could use storytelling insights from science in particular, organizational psychology to really help people change something about the way they work or change the way a leader leads his team or her team. And I thought that was okay. This is a more interesting path. I'll be honest, I also noticed those people didn't starve like a lot of the fiction authors. So there was that as well. But I left and did a program in organizational psychology with the full intention of, this is what I'm going to do, this is what I'm going to write about.

I was working in industry. I was working in the pharmaceutical industry at the time, doing all of those degrees, sort of part-time. A couple pretty seismic shifts happen in the world of medicine. And I found myself

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thinking that a lifeboat was needed and that actually became academia because I was qualified for it. I don't know that I ever actually wanted to teach more than as an adjunct, which I still do from time to time now, but full-time presented itself. It seemed like a good medium by which to actually start conducting some of the research I was writing about and all that sort of thing. But I'm very much an accidental professor and an intentional author, which is the flip from a lot of folks there.

Roger Dooley: Wow. Usually it's the other way around. Somebody does some cool research or they write about it and get some traction and they're off and running, but, well, that's great. And not that many, a org psych people out there, it seems like, so good to know. Getting to your book about working remotely, and managing remote teams, and building remote teams, fascinating area that some companies have been doing it forever, others it's kind of a brand new phenomenon some feared. One thing that I noticed was a quote from Peter Drucker. I've always thought he was ahead of the time, but you quote him from, I think 1993 as saying that commuting to the office is obsolete. Now, I get that being said today, a lot of people have been saying that for five years or longer because we've had all these great virtual tools, but in 1993, I mean, email was barely functional then I'm not even sure. I mean, it existed for sure, but what do you think he was thinking?

David Burkus: Well, I think he and Charles Handy who basically at the invention of the fax machine decided that pretty much the same thing, really not the beginning of remote work, but the end of kind of that mega corporate HQ and that satellite offices scattered around the city would work better than one big building downtown the way so many

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people are used to. And I think what all three of them saw and especially Drucker saw, that is knowledge work requires some level of trust and autonomy with the individual worker, right? There's an assumption in industrial work that presence equals productivity because you have to be there in order to keep the factory line running.

But in knowledge work, it's different. You really can sort of do it from anywhere. And that when you manage a team, when you lead a whole organization from a place of recruiting the best people you can find and then trusting them to do their work, freedom over where they do that work is a given. And it's been interesting to me, not why Charles Handy saw that 40 years ago, what's interesting to me is how much existing leaders went kicking and screaming into the remote work movement when again, people like Drucker and Handy have known it for decades, right?

And so there has been a trend, I actually call it the rise and fall and rise because it's always sort of two steps forward, one step back. But really the great work from home experiment that began for a lot of people all around the same time in mid-March 2020 was what I think finally forced a lot of corporate leaders and a lot of managers to realize that when we go back, when it's safe to go back and it's possible to go back, not everybody's going back all of the time and therefore I really have no other choice at this point but to lead from a place of trust and autonomy.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Overall, David, what's your take on a remote... I mean, obviously you're sort of bullish on

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it, but I mean, there is controversy even among pretty smart people about not whether we should sometimes work remotely, but how important that office experience is. I mean, Elon Musk is pretty skeptical of full-time remote work. There are, I think Google has been, and some other of course, you mentioned Marissa Meyer who famously went and brought Yahoo back into the office a while ago. Clearly, we can get work done remotely, but I think there's legitimate questions about things like creativity, the interactions among people, architects have designed headquarters and research facilities to create collisions between people who are in different areas, different departments and they really value those random in-person interactions that you really don't have in the Zoom world very much. So what's your sort of a 50,000 foot view take on that?

David Burkus: I mean, you're exactly right. The interesting thing is a lot of those buildings that started out designed for random collisions turned into giant interruption factories because they were way too open, right? So there was, and this is something I was writing, open offices was something I was writing negatively about since 2015, because there was that serendipity benefit, but there was also increases in stress and distraction and a bunch of other stuff. I think the question isn't will work being at the office or work... I think the question is, what type of work are we talking about, right? The average knowledge worker, whether that's an accountant, or a marketer, or anybody who uses the means of production between their ears, they actually do various different types of work throughout the day.

And we've known this in an office setting for a number of years, that giving people a say over the environment that

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they do that work in, makes them more productive, right? So even during the architecture debates of the early 2010s, whether open, closed, how open, et cetera, the best term I ever heard described was great offices are like a palette of places that give people freedom to move around and choose what environment, whether that's a small sequestered room, whether that's a big meeting room for collaboration and creativity, whether that's open office, give people the say in where they do that work and over time, they'll figure out the environment that they do different tasks best in.

That hasn't changed. The only difference now is the palette of places spans over zip codes instead of over floors of an office building. And I think it's the same deal that that's what we'll see in most companies. Most offices, they're going to open again, if for no other reason than most contracts are pretty longterm 10 or 20 year lease contracts in some of these big cities. So I can't get out of that lease. A lot of people, a lot of business owners, especially small business owners told me, "We tried, we can't get out of it. So what do we use this thing for?" The way we use the office will change.

We're going to see a lot more meeting rooms, a lot more one company base camp that has an office, but it's mostly distributed, they institute what they call library rules. Meaning, there is an office, but treat it like a library, meaning quiet meetings happen in specific rooms, collisions do happen but hushed tones. The idea here is that you came here to work and to have meetings, but even the people who came into work, there's no difference between them being in the office and somebody being outside of the office, the same rules of

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let's not distract them apply. And the other reason for the office is this kind of meeting hall.

I think that's where we're going. That's why the book's called Leading From Anywhere. I don't think it's a work from the office or work from home, it's a work from anywhere future. And the smart companies are going to find that they are, and really have already found, they need to be giving that autonomy over where I work over to their people. If they haven't learned it, they're going to learn it pretty quickly. Once a decent enough percentage of the population gets vaccinated, if you're one of those people that thought you could send all of your workers home to work remotely for a year and then just call them all back Marissa Meyer style, you're in for about as rough a lesson as she was in for.

Roger Dooley: That's definitely true. And I think there's certainly a mix of opinions on the employee side to0, weather, and there are some who I think really hunger for that in-office interaction and they can't wait to get back into the office. And there's others who are perfectly fine, who work remotely. But you're familiar, I'm sure with the Gallup work on engagement. In fact, I think you mentioned the Gallup engagement work. One of their metrics for engagement is whether you have a best friend at work. Working remotely, it seems like there's not that many people they're going to answer that question positively. They're not probably not going to have a best friend who is in a different zip code or on a different continent. They may like these people and be friends with them. How do you build that team cohesiveness and those friendships that you don't have if people aren't going out for drinks every week or two, having the cake in the break room

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type thing when somebody has a birthday that tend to bring people together and promote those informal conversations?

David Burkus: So when you look at the research on virtual teams, you find that people form bonds a little bit differently. It doesn't mean they don't, but it happens a little bit differently, and often you don't know it's happening. In an office environment, in a co-located environment, it's exactly what you said. It's cake in the break room, or it's maybe volunteering for that same community group around a shared hobby or something like that. Or even just finding out, "Oh, we went to the same college," or, "We cheer for the same football team," or something like that. Well, either football actually American rules are global, it doesn't matter. We cheer for the same team, right? So we bond over what some researchers would call multiplex ties, multiple combinations, multiple reasons or contexts for connection, right?

In a virtual world that happens, but it happens secondarily. The first thing that needs to happen is that we build cadence. We understand each other's work preferences, we learn how best to communicate, how to give feedback. We learn kind of the unspoken norms for responsive rates and that sort of thing. So it actually is that we learn to work together first and then out of that bonds form. Whereas in the office, you might have a best friend and someone you never actually work with, it's just that in one of those serendipitous situations, you found a uncommon commonality with them and that turned into the friendship.

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So from a leadership perspective room, from an individual perspective, the focus should probably be on building that cadence piece first, because then when we enjoy working together, collaborating together, maybe it's working at the same hour on a Zoom call where we're collaborating, or maybe it's just, we're using each other as accountability partners to get some project done, the little conversations that happen after we already enjoy cadence and working together are what build those bonds. So that's where we go first. My encouragement to a lot of teams is actually to start with what you could call a working agreement or a social contract.

I like to think of it as a declaration of interdependence, but it's literally just having a meeting where what we discuss or what are our rules of engagement? What's a reasonable amount of time to respond to an email. What is a reasonable use for email versus a synchronous conversation, like a phone call or a Zoom call? How do we want to signal that we need help? How do we want to give each other feedback? How are we going to keep each other updated on what we're doing? All of these things, unfortunately for a lot of virtual teams, even nine months into this great work from home experiment are still unspoken. And that means people are going to be struggling to build cadence with each other.

So I would start there, and then once you have that sense of cadence, that's where the friendships and the bonds begin to build. And you can build in some unstructured things that help with that. But I think just about everybody has a bit of a hangover from the Zoom happy hours. So I wouldn't be looking there, I would be looking at building cadence first.

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Roger Dooley: I like that, hangover from the Zoom happy hours. Slack is apparently going to be acquired by Salesforce, assuming everything goes through on that. And Slack has been a great tool, in fact, one of the interesting piece of research I saw a while back was that in open offices, people tend to actually interact less because everybody's got their headphones on and because they're trying to get some work done, and so instead they resort to tools like Slack. But at the same time this sort of ongoing conversation on your screen seems like a huge distraction. How do you balance that sort of need for being able to walk over to somebody's desk either literally, if you're there in person, or nudge them electronically, if there's someplace else with being able to actually get work done and hopefully get the state of flow?

David Burkus: Yeah. So this is again, a great use for those team-working agreement conversations. Slack is a really unique tool in that it can be used brilliantly if it's used as sort of a digital water cooler, a place where everyone feels welcomed to contribute to the conversation, but no one feels obligated. And in terms of project updates or requests for help and that sort of thing, maybe we use a different software, an actual project management software that may or may not have that chat capacity. But I do unfortunately see a lot of teams just they trade email for Slack, and then there's a sense that that is what I have to check all the time.

And it's, to be honest with you, it's atrocious. I mean, being, having to have your Slack window open at all hours of the day is like being in a meeting where people pop in and out randomly and speak in sentence fragments while you're trying to get your actual work done. So the trick there is to have that discussion about

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what are we going to use this tool for? All of these things are tools, email is a tool, project management software like Base Camp, or Trello is a tool, Slack is a tool and we need to decide where do we use which tool, and what's the best use of it? But always and all the time is a bad use for just about any tool.

Roger Dooley: I think people expect responsiveness and especially I think probably managers more so, because they're used to being able to look out over the people in front of them and say, "Oh, okay, I got a question for so-and-so, I'm going to go ask that person." If you send out an, either an email or a Slack message or something, there's probably this tendency to expect an immediate answer. If you don't get that immediate answer, well is this person goofing off, what are they doing? But obviously if they are going to be that available and that responsive, they're probably not going to be that productive.

To me, I switched to a home office about 15 years ago or something. And the first few days were amazing. I was like, wow. I would work for a few hours and wake up and say, "Holy cow, nobody interrupted me." And it was really a revelation of how much you could get done without even just sort of the background noise of the office, even without people consciously sort of coming over and asking questions, or without the study a murmur of things going on around you. It really made a huge difference. And I think you've got to quiet that noise electronically too.

David Burkus: That's exactly right. I mean, a hallmark of bad management has always been the equation in your head that presence equals productivity, right? It's never been true. Just because someone's at the office doesn't mean

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they're productive. Ask any IT person how much bandwidth is being used for YouTube and you'll find out that just because they're there doesn't mean they're working, right? And when the great work from home experiment began, a lot of people flipped presence for responsiveness. So they did exactly what you said. It used to be that they were there, therefore they were working and I can interrupt them whenever. Well, now I'm judging whether or not they're productive on how quickly they respond to my requests. Well, you're literally distracting them from something that actually produces more value. You're interrupting them from the deep work, et cetera.

So there's a big shift that has to happen in a lot of people's minds to a focus on an outcomes and a focus on spending people's time wisely. Meetings are another place where this pops up, right? Back in the day, you could call an all hands meeting and it didn't feel like you were actually wasting nine people's time, it felt like you were spending an hour because everyone was required to be there anyway, right? Well, now when everyone's building their own schedules and you're requesting a synchronous meeting, it's much more salient what you're asking people to commit to and so you better spend that time a lot more wisely. A lot wiser, more wisely. I actually don't know how to conjugate that one. And I'm a writer.

Roger Dooley: What about jobs where there is not really an easy metric for output? If you've got a call center worker working remotely, you've got the data to know if that person is being productive or unproductive, you know whether their customer satisfaction ratings are good or not. So that person could be anywhere pretty much, and you wouldn't

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have a problem. But other types of workers, it's not so clear whether they're really being productive.

And I know over the years, some of the outsourcing companies have provided really stringent monitoring tools. You mentioned Upwork in the book, and I think their predecessor oDesk had a thing where you could actually see a camera trained on your worker while they're working on your stuff and have all kinds of very specific electronic indicators of what they were doing. I don't know if he could monitor their keystrokes or not, but I mean, highly intrusive, I guess that would give you a very comfortable feeling that while this person is actually doing something on my job, but really from the individual standpoint, horribly de-motivating at least in my opinion.

So where do you draw the line? Are there tools that people can use that don't seem overly intrusive, but still give managers some kind of a feedback on whether, okay, that person didn't actually finish this job. Was that because it was a really hard job that they worked on for that many hours or because they were goofing off?

David Burkus: So, I mean, it's an interesting dilemma. I mean, first of all, in knowledge work, as we found out hourly turns out to be a terrible reason to pay people. And a lot of the oDesk, and Elance, and Upwork, and now even they're sort of pivoting away from it, it was based on the idea that while I'm paying a contractor, I'm going to pay her by the hour. Well, okay. two different contractors are telling me it takes two different times, how do I know that they're working? And then you get into this buying software. But it turned out that way. I mean, it was easier to go, "Here's what it costs. I'd actually don't care how long it takes you." And I

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think we need to have that approach with a lot of our people as well.

In terms of performance. I mean, you're exactly right, some jobs lend themselves to measurements easier. The biggest thing I'd be focusing on is less about the individual measurements and more about how the team feels, how that person is doing, because you're going to get true feedback on whether or not they're really a performer there. So the questions you've got to ask is are we developing a system where the whole team can, what I often hear called work out loud? Meaning there was a way they can keep each other updated on where they are, right? That can be a project management software. I've seen large organizations whose teams are just trained to use a Google Docs spreadsheet that they just update every day. Here's what I worked on, here's my questions, here's what I need from other people, et cetera.

So you've got to develop that with your team on what that system for working out loud is, and then it'll become pretty obvious, right? Who are the people that are falling behind or not making good on their commitments? But even if you needed another system, that's where something like a peer review system comes in. The big misconception, I think for a lot of people who have are only nine months into this remote work world, this experiment, is that it's actually managing individual relationships, and you're not, you're still managing a team. You need to make sure that teams still functions as a team. And you can't do that unless you're training them to work out loud and you're reminding them that how they're working with their peers is a part of it. And when you do that, then yeah, that peer

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feedback is going to be a much more valuable proxy of who's actually getting stuff done and who isn't.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). One of the new dilemmas in this remote world is that you may be recruiting people remotely and hiring them remotely where you don't have that chance for face-to-face interaction. I mean, not withstanding the fact that most research, it seems to show that an in-person interview is like the worst way to evaluate applicants for a job that its success rate is worse than chance almost because you're measuring a few factors, is this person like me? Do we have things in common? Are they likable and so on, which maybe if you are evaluating a salesperson that likability factors and sort of superficial factors could be important, but otherwise you're hiring a coder or any anybody else, they're not really all that relevant.

But having said that, you talk about automatic, the WordPress developers approach to recruiting. Why don't you explain that? I thought that was pretty clever. It's not something that is not the cheapest way to evaluate applicants, but I think it certainly has a potential for pretty high success rate, if you can pull it off.

David Burkus: Right. So upfront cost of return on investment, right? Because it's definitely effective and that might make it cheaper than what I call basically speed dating, right? Which is what a lot of interview processes before were, and in a virtual world, that's what we flipped to now. You're just speed dating via Zoom or Teams instead of that. But what automatic does is, automatic focuses on how well you actually work with the team. That means once you get past a certain point in the interview process,

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you were invited for what they call a trial. And in the trial you're given clearances, you're paid as a contract labor, if there's a health insurance issue we need to get you, they'll solve that. They're not looking for cheap work. They're looking for a way to evaluate you before they commit.

And to be fair, it works the other way too. Do you enjoy working with this team that we're going to hire you to work with before you commit? And so that period will be anywhere from four to eight weeks, depending on the project you're given. If you're a coder you're working on real code, if you're in customer service and actually everybody's in customer service at some point, you're working on real client tickets and you're getting a real sample of the job, but your team is also getting a really close look at you. And that team feedback gets collected and it gets fed to the final decision maker who may or may not have an interview.

In the early days, Matt Mullenweg did an interview with every person in it before they got hired into the company. Now, there's 1200 people in the organization that doesn't necessarily happen. But what I always thought was interesting is he would do that via text chat. He was just looking to ask you a couple of questions, get a feed for you. And he knew I'm going to be communicating you the most of the time with texts. So my opinion of how well you present yourself on Zoom, doesn't matter. Maybe it's relevant for your team, but it's irrelevant to me. I don't want my biases in there. I care about what the team says about how well you work with them.

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And I think that's the thing. You may not be able to legally, or even just feasibly in your business to get into a position where you can actually hire people as temporary contractors, but there are things you can do to help judge how well they collaborate with people on your team, there's things you can do to bring more people from your team into the interview process at a bare minimum so that you get a better sense for how well they click with everyone, not just how will they click with you? And there's questions you can ask about how well they collaborate and that sort of thing. But what I love about that is it's the trials process, it's expensive, it's upfront, but it has a great return on investment because it's judging how well does this person collaborate, not just how smart this person is and do they have the right experience, and then do we click interpersonally? We're actually trying to measure what we'll be hiring them to do, which is work with the team.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And also I think that coders in particular, I'm sure that automatic has quite a few of those are difficult to hire a via any kind of interview process. I mean, maybe they can show you something, but you also point out that those crazy puzzles that Google and others have used, where you want to give you some bizarre problem to solve, to see if this—and it's sort of almost like a, not an IQ test exactly, but sort of all how creative and clever is this person, can they think through a complicated problem? But that isn't necessarily a good indicator of whether they're going to actually be able to write code in that particular situation.

David Burkus: Yeah. This is my favorite study I think in the entire book that I covered, which showed that those brain teaser

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puzzle interview questions, literally the only thing they predict is the level of sadism of your hiring manager. They don't predict performance, they don't predict the thought process, they predict whether or not somebody is Googled the answer to a bunch of brain teasers in the past, and they predict whether or not the manager itself likes watching people suffer through those difficult questions. So definitely in favor of skipping those. And maybe if you're the type of manager that wants to give those brain teasers, maybe you skip the interview process entirely and outsource it to the rest of your team because that might make for a better decision in the long run anyway.

Roger Dooley: Right. Well, I mean, it's not the process you described, is not unlike offering somebody an internship where companies will bring in interns and then extend offers to some of those interns. And that too is an expensive process, but everybody understands what's going on, what it's for. The interns aren't necessarily going to be paid their full salary as if they were hired on as an associate or whatever it might be. But they know it's an evaluation process and it does give them a chance to work. And it also reminds me a little bit of what some other companies do, Zappos for instance, would bring people on and then they would offer people money to leave at some point. So a little bit different approach, but there's that same sort of evaluation process where both sides can see how good the fit is.

And chances are in most cases, if the individual realizes that it's not a good fit, they're not going to want to continue it either, because certainly that happens too. Or somebody joins a company, "Wow, I get to work for

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Facebook." And then they realize, "Well, working for Facebook isn't really what I thought it was going to be or whatever." But at the same time, it's, "Well, I can't really... I don't want to quit. I don't want to give up on this." So companies like Zappos, make it easy to say, "This wasn't a good fit. I'm just going to take this little payment and run and do something else." So in both cases, very different approach, but they're trying to make sure that you've really got that fit that is going to last. And then as a result, presumably be turnover in the long run is going to be a whole lot less in both cases.

David Burkus: Right. Exactly. What I love about the paid to quitter or anythings like that as they reduce the sunk costs, like you said. The other thing they do, and this is something I think is interesting about organizational life as a whole. The first is that you actually know pretty early in a person's first year, if they're going to make it to the first year, right? But because of sunk costs and because maybe we don't want to admit we made a mistake, we throw extra training, we allow for bad performance. This is why actually the cost of replacing a bad employee is so high is because we let it go on for as long as we do.

And the other thing I'll say is very rarely does a company actually evaluate who's hiring based on whether or not they're hiring. This is true of remote teams, co-located teams, this is true of organizations as a whole. It astounds me, we give hiring authority at a certain level, varies by company, to managers. And then we never make that a part of the manager's evaluation, right? What's the tenure? How well did the people you hire work out? I used to see it all the time coming from the industry I worked in before I went back to graduate school that you would

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have this person make a hire, build out a whole team, get promoted quickly, because we're a rapidly growing organization, and then nobody would be like, "Well, hang on. Because you hired nine people and five of them flamed out, so should we really make you the new regional manager or should we fix that issue first?"

Right. We very, very rarely do that. And I think if we did, we would see the need to do things like this, to build in trials or trial periods, or give people an easy out where we say, "We'll even help you find another job, but it's obvious this isn't a fit for either of us. And it's better to call it now than be miserable for nine more months."

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). One of the real challenges I think of actually even in-person teams is building that team identity relating to corporate culture and bringing everybody together, getting people on the same page. But of course, when people are in different areas, different time zones even that can be kind of difficult. I realized that a big chunk of the book is about this. Can't really do an exhaustive review of the possibilities here, but what would a couple of tips or ideas be for somebody who's trying to manage a remote team to bring them together and relate to each other as team members and have a similar culture.

David Burkus: So a couple of things I'll speak to in terms of a team culture that really bonds, et cetera. What we know from research on virtual teams is they both have what we would call shared understanding and shared identities. Shared understanding as do I know the knowledge, skills and abilities of my coworkers? Do I know the context they're working in? Are they working from a home office?

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I'm coming to you from about a 10 by 10 room that's in the basement of the house, it's quiet. Other people have been working for nine months from behind a folding screen in their dining room, right? So do I understand that context? That's all the shared understanding piece.

Shared identity is do I associate with that team? This is going to be a big issue as we move back to the office because not everybody's going back all at once and it's going to be really easy for us versus them to start being the us that's co-located versus the them. And we don't want that on our team either. So it's honestly little things you can do. I'm a big fan of stuff. There are companies that do what we call virtual tours. So I'm going to give you a tour of my office space, right? I'll grab that webcam and I'll move it around and show you where I work from so you understand the context that I'm working in. Maybe I tell you some things I do to stay productive, so we're sharing best practices. But it's really more about understanding that context.

In terms of identity and building that sense of team, it's really how do we recreate those serendipitous conversations, the collisions we were talking about earlier, et cetera? And I think the easiest thing to do, not the only, maybe not even the most effective, but the best place to start is build kind of a habit on your team, that when we say the meeting is Monday from 10 to 11, what that means is your on Zoom, or Microsoft Teams, or WebEx from 9:45 to 11:20 or so. So buffer time before or after. Kind of like the way people would walk together to the conference room and have that conversation, some people would come in early. Like I said before, I think we're all sort of hung over from the Zoom happy hours.

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We don't want a dedicated time on our calendar where we have to just be social.

But if you build some buffer and it's understood that, "Hey, the meeting's over. But if you want to hang out," especially with extroverted people, "if you just want to hang out and have unrelated conversations, this is the space to do." So you'd be shocked at once that becomes a habit on the team that I can sign in 15, 10 minutes early and I know that I'll have coworkers there or I can stay on and not just click leave or that white meeting has been ended by the host that just sort of jars everybody at the end of a team meeting, if you avoid that sort of stuff and give people space, you'd be surprised how quickly they start having those conversations and building that sense of identity that's feels really similar to when we were all together physically.

Roger Dooley: Well, we could go on forever, but I want to be respectful of your time David. Tell our audience how they can find you and your ideas.

David Burkus: So I mean, if you're a longtime listener the show and you're part of the very special end of the podcast club of people who listen all the way through, not only does Roger love you, I do too, and you already know that the show notes and this page, all of that is going to be the best thing for you. If you're driving, you can't get to that then davidburkus.com, B-U-R-K-U-S.com, is probably going to be the best place. I'm really lucky Roger. I have a very weird unique name, which means all the domains are open. So davidburkus.com is probably the best place to go to keep the conversation going. And I hope you do. I hope we keep the conversation going, because this is a

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topic that's going to be in a lot of people's minds and in a lot of people's calendars, and their day-to-day life for a number of years.

Roger Dooley: I thought my name was pretty unique to David, until Marvel created a character of the same name. And suddenly I was competing with Disney and IMDB for my name.

David Burkus: Wow.

Roger Dooley: At least I had the domain locked up, but the Google results were dicey for a while and thank goodness they killed him off. I'm hoping like many superheroes—I don't think he had any superpowers, he was just a boss—but they don't resurrect him. But anyway, yes, the show notes page will be at [rogerdooley.com/podcast](https://www.rogerdooley.com/podcast), and we'll have text and audio versions of the conversation there as well. Plus links to any resources we spoke about. David, thanks so much for being on the show.

David Burkus: Oh Roger, thank you so much for having me.

Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is [RogerDooley.com](https://www.RogerDooley.com).

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

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