

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

You can listen to past episodes at www.TheFutureOrganization.com/future-work-podcast/. To learn more about Jacob and the work he is doing please visit www.TheFutureOrganization.com. You can also subscribe to Jacob's [YouTube](#) channel, follow him on [Twitter](#), or visit him on [Facebook](#).

0:00:01 Jacob: Hello everyone, welcome to another episode of The Future of Work podcast. My guest today is Bruce Daisley. He is a VP at Twitter. He is the author of a brand new book, which I believe is coming out February of next year, and it is called Eat Sleep Work Repeat, and he's also the host of one of the most popular podcasts in the UK that has the same name. Bruce, thank you for joining me.

0:00:25 Bruce: Thank you so much for having me.

0:00:27 Jacob: So I actually have a copy of your book here, a uncorrected proof, it says, and I had the opportunity to go through this. A lot of really, really cool stuff in there. But before we jump in, why don't you give us a little bit of background information about you, who you are, what you're doing these days?

0:00:47 Bruce: Yeah, so like you said, I work at Twitter, I'm a VP at Twitter, I run our European and Middle Eastern business. I really got interested in fixing work from the perspective that the culture at Twitter has been glorious, it's been truly wonderful, and it really occurred to me in moments, especially in the UK a couple of years ago, we went from this incredible effervescent, caffeinated culture, incredibly productive incredibly creative, and then something went wrong. And I started doing a podcast really as a process of self-discovery, self-learning. It's quite a light-hearted take on the science behind fixing work, and I just found myself sort of mesmerized because it turned out that there's loads of evidence of how to make work better, and yet, strangely, none of it reaches people in jobs. And so that became the baffling enigma for me. How can I get more of this information to me about how to fix work? And that became my mission. So I set about doing that on my podcast, and then turned that into a book, it became best-selling business book of the year in the UK, and it's now coming to the US.

0:02:08 Jacob: I'm sure a lot of people are very curious, as am I actually. What is it like to work at Twitter? What is that corporate culture? You said it's amazing. Give people a little bit of a sneak peak about working there.

0:02:19 Bruce: Yeah. I think probably one of the defining qualities of working at a place like Twitter is it requires a degree of resilience. Not every day is a win. We don't go home, we, in some descriptions these challenges we have, we're not the biggest in our sector, and there's often unexpected things that beset us. Anyone operating in a business as rich with diverse perspectives and different consumers as Twitter means there's often very unexpected solutions. The way one of my colleague describes it, she says that when you've got half a billion tweets every day, it means that a one in a million chance happens 500 times every day, and so that's it, so it's often unpredictable, it's immensely fast-moving. It means that you can never sort of... You can never

think the job's done, really.

0:03:24 Jacob: Which actually sounds fun, [chuckle] maybe a little bit stressful for some people, but it sounds overall fun.

0:03:31 Bruce: I think, Jacob, if the plight of modern work is that we're seeing more and more of a burnout epidemic. I think that relentlessness of work that I was describing there, that I think increasing numbers of people are seeing in their job is the context for all of these discussions. So by half of... Half of all US workers describe themselves as being in some state of burnout, I think it's higher amongst American teachers, teachers are debating quitting their job, two-thirds of tweet... Teachers are debating quitting their jobs in the next five years. So we see all around us this phenomenon of burnout, and I think that relentless, "We need to work harder, we need to be cleverer next year," and that can have a consequence. And I think that's what was the fascination for me. How could I help solve this for the people I worked with?

0:04:30 Jacob: Makes a lot of sense, yeah, makes a lot of sense. It's something a lot of people are struggling with at organizations around the world. But what about Twitter's space? I mean, do you guys mainly have an open space? Is there free food, free snacks, all that sort of stuff, typical Silicon Valley company?

0:04:46 Bruce: Yeah, we do have open-plan offices. I think, truly, I think that they're largely the norm of a lot of different work spaces now. Yeah, it's got some of the things that you might associate with tech firms. I think the critical thing I would say is the company's remarkably good at trying to reward workers, and make the work space satisfying, but ultimately, real fascination for me was that when I... Actually those extrinsic motivations, those perks with people feeling satisfied by their jobs, and I think that's our focus. How could we make sure that people can feel that irrespective of perks and benefits, they can do their best work at a place like Twitter?

0:05:37 Jacob: Well, I love that you mentioned that because a lot of organizations seem to be very focused on things like perks and benefits and the free food and snacks, but you actually find that, especially Twitter, employees care about more than that. So what is it specifically at Twitter that you find employees really care about and value the most?

0:05:55 Bruce: Yeah, I mean, there's an interesting thing that when, not just to our organization, probably one of the world's leading experts on workplace motivation is a Harvard researcher called Teresa Amabile, and she says that a good day at work is when we make progress in something meaningful. That's a really interesting notion, I think most of us can recognize it, make progress in something meaningful. A lot of us know is that we're so beset with Slack messages, also on pings and meetings...

0:06:29 Bruce: That I think the average meeting burden for most workers is about 16 hours a week of meetings. So we're so overwhelmed with those demands, that the idea of making progress in something meaningful seems like a pipe dream rather than something we can accomplish most days. And I think that's the critical thing, knowing that workers generally wanted to make progress in something they did generally want to accomplish something, but work stands in their way. I think it's a really critical reminder of how work's failing.

0:07:02 Jacob: It is, it is, and I'm sure a lot of people can agree to that. And you've cited a couple of statistics in your book around how the employee engagement score is that companies around the

world are just abysmal. Why do you think that's the case? Why does so many people around the world genuinely not like their jobs?

0:07:21 Bruce: It's really interesting thing that... If you have a look at status, higher power is dis-inhibiting. What I mean by that is if you watch people who are bosses, people who are presidents, people who are high status individuals, they generally are unencumbered by this sort of self-consciousness that the rest of us fail. And the correlate of that, the flip side of that is that lack of status is inhibiting, meaning that when we have no position in the hierarchy, when we are junior, when our opinions are told that they don't matter, it means that we repress how we feel. And you observe this more and more, countries that have strong hierarchy generally find that their workers are less engaged, because when they've got less input into decisions, when they've got less contribution to make, they generally think, "I can't get anything done here." So they're gonna repress their emotions. And so you observe this, one of the most hierarchical countries in the world is France, and worker engagement is one of the lowest, 3% of French workers describe themselves as job. I mean, it's a number so low that it makes you go back and check the methodology. But it's the same methodology they use around the world, and yeah workplace engagement is really low, we feel like we're bowing to our bosses.

0:08:51 Jacob: So what's the solution? What would you do to fix that? If anything?

0:08:55 Bruce: Yeah, I guess, there's a number of things. The first thing I would say is that quite often when you're thinking about how to improve workplace culture, there's two ways of looking at it. I see it as like, big picture, workplace culture and then little picture, macro and micro. Obviously, when we're looking to change the culture of an organization we might change the policies, we might change the philosophy about home working, these are big picture culture things, but more often than not, if people are feeling burnt out, exhausted, tired, things that are closer to them impact on their level of connection with their job. And so that's why my take on these things is to actually to improve work for most of us, to make our teams feel more fun, to make our teams feel more productive, more able to hit our targets, our quotas, then there are things that any of us can do, whether we're the boss or whether we're the new starters straight out of college, there's things that all of us can do. And that's what's inspired me.

0:10:08 Bruce: I think the reason why the book has ended up being the best selling business book of the year in the UK, is because these changes are so simple, that anyone can stage their own intervention. They can say, "Actually, we could do two of these things next week." So let me give you some examples. Some of the things that we find is that if we are having 16 hours a week of meetings, one of the best things that we can do is just thinking about how we could do those meetings in a different way. One of the things that people constantly tweet me or hit me up on LinkedIn about is they love walking meetings. Really simple.

0:10:49 Bruce: If you've got a one on one meeting with someone, then rather than sitting at a desk in a contained room, either walk around the building, or even better, maybe walk outside, grab a coffee together and going for a walk in nature is correlates very strongly with us. Having more system thinking, having being able to see a bigger picture. It's also very good for our creative thought. If you are worried about the sort of security of your ideas, then I want you to know that the Mafia endorse walking meetings as safer than being in meeting rooms. So this whole load of reasons, then to think, okay, so the only thing stopping me from going for a walking meeting, is that suggesting it might be a bit awkward. And if you take someone into your trust, and you say, "Look, we're gonna try this, do you fancy giving and get a go." quite often you find that people say, "You

know what, I've been in three meetings this morning, that was the best one of the day." So just actually, as soon as you then understand the doing these small interventions can make our life, can make our work feel more rewarding, satisfying, happy, then you start thinking, "Oh, well, maybe there's more things I can do to enjoy work."

0:12:15 Jacob: Well, that brings up an interesting question around who is responsible for your happiness at work? Because there's a lot of discussion around, well, the organization should be doing XYZ, your managers should be doing this. I mean, your book is clearly a manifesto for what we should be doing as individuals, but when you think about purpose and meaning and happiness, whose responsibility is that for employees? Is it up to us as individuals, is it our managers, companies or blend.

0:12:43 Bruce: So the... The critical thing, I think, is that we could spend a lifetime waiting for our bosses to be enlightened, we could wait a lifetime for our bosses to think how can they improve workforce? And the evidence I found is that quite often low status people are able to change the environment of work far more than we think. Whether it was the one organization I went into where the receptionist improved their workplace culture, or I went into other places where... Just a new starter with... Armed with a newspaper article, and just an ambition to change things helped transform another organization.

0:13:31 Jacob: Wait now I'm intrigued, can you just share a little bit more about those first two stories?

0:13:37 Bruce: Yeah, so let me give you some examples. So firstly, I went into one organization, and their receptionist was an actor and she was between jobs, and she used to come back and she would come into the business, and she said to someone one time, she said "You know the culture here is not good at all". And they said, "Oh really, and how do you know?" She said, "Well my job, the fact I'm sort of contract or a temporary worker, I go from business to business, and there's some wonderful places and there's some terrible places, and this is the worst". And then, so they were like, "Okay wow, gosh, we hadn't realized, we hadn't realized that we were a bad business". She decided to... Took it upon herself. One Thursday afternoon, she bought a few bags of potato chips and a few Pringles and she laid them out on paper plates in the middle of the business. She sent an email to everyone saying it's the best time of the week. We call potato chips crisps in the UK. But she says it's crisps Thursday where it's the best time of the week. And she... And people were initially baffled by it.

0:14:54 Bruce: Anyway they gathered to tuck into these snacks. And gradually over the course of the next few weeks, people started saying, "Oh I've really enjoy that". It's sort of I guess for a British here it would be what the pub used to achieve, it would be sort of what just going for an after drink... After work drink would have achieved. But it did it in a far more easier adaptable way. And actually, people started talking about it as their favourite part of the week. And very quickly, they had very soon, they had a new chief exec join the business, they were part of a big group, so they had a new chief exec, and everyone realized right we're gonna have to tell the new boss about this sort of snack-filled Thursday afternoon intervention, and they realized "Oh right it's become one of our favourite rituals. It's become one of our favourite parts of the week". So, just realizing that you can do one of those things, and improving the culture seems incredibly powerful.

0:15:55 Bruce: Let me give you another example. I was dealing with a very busy hospital. So this is a Hospital in the center of London, incredibly high demand, incredibly large number of people

coming in 'cause it's an urban hospital. And one of the people who worked there was a doctor, and she realized the hard workers were feeling burnt out, and she said... She decided, "I wonder if there's anything that I can do to reduce the impact". Well as part of their weekly routine they had 10 minutes set aside every day for training, just what's the latest on how to apply dressings to wounds, what's the latest on how to take a blood test. And she realized that they weren't using those 10 minutes every day, so she introduced... One day a week, she said, "We're going to play games", right? That's sort of a curious decision.

0:16:55 Bruce: She brought in some games that are often used by actors, so a way for actors to connect with each other to warm up. And she describes this wonderful scene where they were all playing a tournament of rock paper scissors, they were all playing a tournament of this game where the winner would stay on and play the next person. And she described a wonderful scene where the winner in this situation was an Ecuadorian woman, a young nurse, an Ecuadorian nurse. And the Ecuadorian nurse, when she won this competition, she jumped onto a table and she sang the Ecuadorian national anthem, and everyone in the room took a step back and said, "Oh wow, what an incredible proud anthem". And they said, "Oh so what's Ecuador like?" "Oh, this is amazing. Next week, why don't we all sing our national anthems". And what had happened was it turned work into this place where maybe we don't even intend it to be as impersonal as it is, but she'd helped personalize it, she'd helped turn a moment of togetherness into a moment of connection.

0:18:03 Bruce: So, I'm really confident that all of us can take small steps, if we wait for our bosses to fix work, we may be waiting for a long time, but there's lots of things that the rest of us can do in the meantime.

0:18:16 Jacob: What happens in that kind of environment? But first of all, by the way, I love those stories. But what happens if you're in that kind of an environment and your bosses aren't as accepting of those things? So I mean I'm... Like I'm thinking of the receptionist story or the doctor story, what happens if the receptionist did that, and the boss came over and said, "Hey what the hell is this, get rid of this right now". And quickly just shuts that idea down. So is there something that has to happen in the corporate culture, or the type of people that are there? What happens if your managers just shut all your ideas down? Because from what I hear that happens to a lot of people.

0:18:52 Bruce: Yeah. It's exactly the right question to ask because to my mind we're faced with a situation where quite often bosses might be... The way, that someone described it to me, he said, the inside of him was a 19th-century mill owner. And what he meant by that was that he said, I think I'm one of the good guys. But when people aren't at their desks at 9 o'clock, or when they're not back from lunch at half-past one or one, whenever they come back from lunch, immediately the 19th century mill owner inside of me starts saying, right, that's it no one's taking work seriously. I'm going to change things around here and all of us have got a degree of that inside of us. We've all got something that's slightly more judgmental than we would like to admit. And this is why I think a book like this is designed not for a CEO, but it's designed for everyone because the only way that we're going to be able to change work is, if we bring some evidence to the discussion, if we bring some proof to the table. And, there are some wonderful stories in the book about people who've changed their working hours, their working patterns, the way that decisions are made. My personal feeling is that weekend emails are especially toxic and what I found is that.

0:20:19 Jacob: I Totally agree, totally agree.

0:20:23 Bruce: Yeah, and what I found is that quite often, we imagine that our bosses send

weekend emails, of some malign intent, trying to get everyone to work. And quite often what happens is you sit down with bosses and you say, "Hi, can I just ask you why you sent that email at the weekend?" And the boss will normally say, "Oh, no, I didn't need anyone to read it. I was just clearing my inbox." And then you say, "Okay."

[laughter]

0:20:50 Bruce: Well, one of the things that happen is when a boss spends an hour emailing at the weekend, each one of their workers, statistically, based on the evidence routine, each one of their workers spends at least 15 minutes. So if a boss has got a team of 20 people, then by emailing themselves for an hour, they have created an extra five hours of work amongst their team. So effectively, these things, they sort of spread. It's like a viral internet clip, the idea of your boss working makes everyone else work. And one of the things that correlates most closely with burnout is people working at the weekend. When we don't have the ability to switch off it's when we hit the wall when we can't keep going. And the sad thing is, it's our best people that get most, unfortunately, burnt out. So if you've got someone wonderful in your team, someone who sets the team alight with ideas, with imagination, with energy, then if we allow weekend emailing, then quite often it will impact those people the most.

0:22:00 Jacob: I always say that connectivity does not imply availability, and we always assume that just because we're connected means that we always need to be available. And I know a lot of people like this, friends of mine that they're constantly on their phones, we see this with our co-workers, we see this with our friends. And sometimes we have to even tell them like, "Hey, I'm here", there's a person here."

0:22:24 Bruce: Yeah.

0:22:24 Jacob: "Put away your phone." And it's usually because, somebody is messaging them, and they feel like they have to respond. And I think it's okay for us to admit that. If we're connected, we don't have to be available. And we need to remember that we control technology, technology doesn't control us.

0:22:41 Bruce: Absolutely.

0:22:42 Jacob: And you have these three great sections in your book, recharge, sync, and buzz. And so I have the book open here to recharge. And I wanted to just go through a couple of these, some of these things I'm actually doing right now and I found them to be super, super helpful. So the ones that I'm practicing right now, for example, are turning off your notifications. So I have a relatively new iPhone, an iPhone X, I disabled all notifications from social media, from email, I don't get any of that stuff. Because I remember a couple of years ago when I used to, I would just be walking in literally every five seconds taking out my phone, I got a tweet, I got a message on LinkedIn, I got an email. And I would spend all of my time throughout the day, checking notifications, checking email, sending tweets, my whole day would go by. And I would think, "wait a minute, I didn't get anything done today". And it's because I [chuckle] spent all my time just letting these notifications drive me. So I think that's a super, super easy and practical tip. Do you find that that's hard for people to do?

0:23:50 Bruce: Well, the wonderful thing about that is that, someone's actually done research into it. So, I say it in the book, the research that was done, where the researchers actually wanted to get

people to turn notifications off on their phone for a week. And they couldn't get enough people to commit to doing it. So they in fact backed down, they were about to abandon their research. And they backed down, that they asked their research group, would you turn your notifications off on your phone for a day. Two years later, so like acquired back then. Two years later half of all of those people who turned their notifications off for a day, still had them turned off because as soon as we pause, as soon as we stop the noise, we start realizing that rather than it making us feel disconnected from the world, it makes us more connected with what we're doing. And I think we're understanding more and more how to best get the value out of our phones. I adore my phone. It's my...

[laughter]

0:24:54 Jacob: I've never heard anybody say that about a phone before.

0:24:58 Bruce: I love it. Man, the things it does is just like magic.

0:25:02 Jacob: It's amazing.

0:25:04 Bruce: It truly is. But, I think understanding, renegotiating our relationship with our phone seems to be a healthy thing to do.

0:25:12 Jacob: Yeah, totally agree. The other thing that you mention in here which we recently started doing in my house, we have a, have a digital Sabbath. And so what we try to do is every... Every Friday, we try to do kinda no technology Friday. And so, when the end of the day comes, when we pick up our daughter from school, around 5:00, 5:30-ish, we try to shut down technology. Phones, computers, television. And we'll just spend the night talking, hanging out, playing games. My wife and I, after our daughter goes to bed, we'll spend time reading, sitting on the couch together. Often times we find that we go to bed early. And on those nights, I find that I get the most amount of sleep.

0:25:57 Bruce: Yeah.

0:25:58 Jacob: Usually, I get six, seven hours, average. But on those digital Sabbath days, I get nine hours of sleep, eight and a half hours of sleep. It's amazing. And I wake up on Saturday and it's just... You feel refreshed. It's amazing.

0:26:14 Bruce: Yeah. I, met someone, actually, who'd, who'd tracked this over time. And he said the thing that correlates with the worst sleep, is spending a lot of time on spreadsheets. He said, he said it's almost like we sort of go into our go into our sleep wanting to solve the spreadsheet. But yes, absolutely. I think understanding that inputs have an impact on our outputs is really critical. Yeah. I've often chatted to Cal Newport, who has spent a lot of time...

0:26:46 Jacob: He, he was a podcast guest here a little while ago.

0:26:48 Bruce: Okay. Yeah. Well, Cal Newport, when I chatted to him last, he was saying board games seem to have this magical quality of making us feel connected to other human beings, and sometimes our devices make us feel disconnected. And there's some truth in that.

0:27:06 Jacob: Oh. I think there's [chuckle] a lot of truth in that, for sure. The other thing that I wanted to ask you about in Recharge. Well, there's actually two more. One is, you talk about having

a monk mode morning. And the second one I wanted to ask you about was around shortening your work week, which I think a lot of people will be interested in. So let's start off with having a monk mode morning. What is that?

0:27:33 Bruce: Well, Cal Newport, the academic we've just been talking about, he talks a lot about the fact that when we go into deep work, when we go into these periods of often uncomfortable concentration, that's when we seem to get difficult things done. I think his philosophy is very clearly, nothing is accomplished by easy work. We need to sort of knuckle down and do the hard stuff, if we're gonna get something hard done. And so consequently, a few of us might ask ourselves, "Well, look, if I'm in meetings all day and my inbox never stops expanding, when can I get some concentration done"? And that's where the idea of a monk mode morning comes in.

0:28:23 Bruce: The idea that maybe we set aside 60 minutes or 90 minutes, once or twice a week, where we just concentrate on getting the most important task in front of us, done. So that might be, we say, "You know what? Wednesday at 8 or 9," whenever we would normally start our commute, "Wednesday, I'm gonna just spend 90 minutes concentrate on getting that document done, then I'll do my commute. I'll go into the office the moment I've got that done." And in my experience, what you're able to accomplish in 90 minutes of uninterrupted concentration is mind blowing, compared to what you expect. We're so used to doing things in snatched two minutes here and there between emails, between meetings.

0:29:11 Jacob: Yeah, multitasking.

0:29:12 Bruce: Absolutely. And the evidence strongly suggests that when we switch between things, the different things we've been switching between, stay in our attention. It's called attention residue. They stay in our attention for up to 20 minutes. So we think we're concentrating. We're not concentrating, we're sort of lost in a haze of multiple different confusing things. And I think as soon as we recognize that, as soon as we say, "Okay. Look. I'm gonna concentrate on getting something done", it becomes a super power where we can accomplish far more than we imagined possible.

0:29:49 Jacob: Totally agree. For me... Well, a couple of other things I've done. So I also don't check email or social media until 4 o'clock every day. Now, in all fairness, I do have an assistant that, that works with me, who helps me. If there's an emergency she says, "Hey, Jacob, you gotta check this". So I try to have somebody help me so that I don't need to be checking email or social media at all, until 4 o'clock. And I also don't have meetings on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. So only Tuesdays and Thursdays are for all of my meetings. And at least personally for me, I found that when I have days that are full of meetings, those are the days when I'm most exhausted. When I'm in the middle of doing something and then, "Oh, man. I just got into the flow here, and now I got a meeting for 30 minutes".And...

0:30:37 Bruce: There's a really interesting... Yeah. There's a really interesting philosophy, by Paul Allen, who I think was sort of early at Microsoft.

0:30:44 Jacob: Yeah.

0:30:45 Bruce: And he, he separates it into a maker's diary, and a manager's diary, and we can, we can be both. But a maker's diary needs blocks of uninterrupted concentration. If we're trying to create something, then we need to be sort of in that... In that sort of, that sense of flow. We need to feel like, "Okay, yeah, and that would lead to that", and allowing thoughts to connect. When we're

in a manager's zone, we can zip between 15 minute meetings. It almost becomes adrenalizing that we're dashing between meetings, we're ticking off emails and responding to things.

0:31:26 Jacob: It's exciting.

0:31:27 Bruce: Yeah, that's right, but we need to understand when we're in a maker's zone and when we're in a manager's zone. Because if you, if you've got a block of four hours to try and create something, and then you put a meeting in the middle of it, you're likely to find that the energy that you needed to create, will be disrupted by that 30-minute meeting.

0:31:47 Jacob: Yeah.

0:31:47 Bruce: Far more than we think. So I think setting time aside where we're going to make and setting a time aside when we're going to manage, seems to be an important sort of dichotomy as an important decision we need to make.

0:32:00 Jacob: Yeah. Nope. Couldn't agree more. So this brings us to the next one, which was shortening your work week. And I found this particularly interesting. I don't know if you saw this study that just came out. I believe it was Microsoft in Japan.

0:32:13 Bruce: Yeah.

0:32:14 Jacob: So you saw that right, where they shortened their work week to four days instead of five, and they actually saw an increase in productivity. I believe it was by 40% that jumped up, which I thought was fascinating.

0:32:27 Bruce: Yeah, it really is. I think we're just at the outset now, of being honest and trying to look into the impact of these things. But look, I think there's no shortage of people who will say the opposite. So Elon Musk, Marissa Mayer, both said that they're working weeks are around 120 hours a week. So that was...

0:32:47 Jacob: Wow. That is crazy.

0:32:49 Bruce: I know. If you want the Elon Musk experience, he describes that he sleeps under his desk three days a week. So...

0:32:56 Jacob: Who wants to go work there?

0:33:00 Bruce: So [chuckle] if you wanna gift someone the Elon Musk experience, you could go and buy them a sleeping bag and you could invite them to do the same. But, so I became curious, because I thought, "Wow, if that is the practice of champions, if that is how you become incredibly successful, I'd like to find the proof of it." And in fact, as soon as you start setting about discovering whether there's any truth to those things, you hit on the exact opposite. It seems like anyone who's studied human cognition, human thinking, productivity, they struggle to see how productivity keeps going after we hit about 50 hours a week of work. And that's the unfortunate thing that people might say to themselves, "Well, look I'm in that 'start up zone. I need to keep working, I need to put in long hours.'" And when scientists have taken the effort to study the quality of work that goes on in those situations, they're resolute you could achieve less by working less... You could achieve more by working less. It becomes fascinating, because then work becomes this lie we tell ourselves. Work

becomes this un-truth where we... Because we want to believe that working longer is the solution, then that's the answer that we reach.

0:34:18 Jacob: Another one that at least something that I've practiced, and I was trying to find if it fits into one of these. I didn't see it in there specifically, but maybe you can tell me if it falls under one of the 30 that you have. I found that saying "No" has been a very useful skill. Now I totally recognize. I don't work for a company like a Twitter, or a Google, or a GE or anything like that. I have my own team that I run. And so for me, perhaps maybe I get even more requests, I don't know. But I have found that during the course of my career, I would get a lot of emails and requests all the time. "Hey, let's just chat. I wanna pick your brain. Do you wanna just come hang out at this conference? Do you wanna speak here for free? Do you wanna jump on a quick chat?" And when I was first getting off into working for myself when I first started around 15 years ago, I would say yes to a lot of these things, and the same thing would happen. I would find that my days would go by, and I gave all my energy and all of my time to other people, and I didn't give myself and my business any time or any energy, and it really, really struggled.

0:35:31 Jacob: So one of the things that I really had to learn over the years was to be able to say "no" to people. And sometimes it's not easy. Sometimes it's your friends, sometimes it could be a family member, somebody that you owe a favor to, but I think learning to say "no" is also a very, very invaluable skill. Does that fit under one of these categories?

0:35:52 Bruce: Absolutely. It broadly fits under a couple of them. The idea that 40 hours is enough of a week, and absolutely. We're in a zone now where we're so... We're in for the first time, really in human civilization, we're surrounded with such abundance, that we find ourselves never having to say no to things. And in fact, it appears the discipline of saying no forces us to make really important decisions. It forces us to say actually, that human cognition is far more finite than sometimes we would like to admit, and just saying yes to everything, maybe yes to another meeting, or yes to just that you're gonna respond to something else or join a call. It's, unfortunately it's forcing us to not make decisions. So I think the critical thing that we can all learn, is that saying no and treating work as far more finite seems to be a really critical thing that we should all do.

0:36:58 Jacob: Yeah, and actually, so one of my team members that I work with, she actually has a very creative way to do this, and I realized that she was doing this a couple years ago and I was like, "Hey, Beth, that's actually really interesting." So I would throw a ton of work at her, and over time she would just say, "Okay, how would you prioritize these?" So she wouldn't say no directly, she would just say, "These are the five things you've given me. How would you prioritize them?" And that was her way of saying, "I can't do all of them at the same time. Which ones would you pick that I do first?" And I thought that was a very unique and clever way, and something that probably a lot of people can do inside of their companies. If your manager comes to you with 40 things, "I gotta get this done, give this to me tomorrow," is to try saying that and say, "Look, I get it. You've given me a lot of things. How would you prioritize? What order would you like these things done in?" And I think that really forces the manager to think like, "Okay, well, there's no way this person is gonna get it done all at the same time," and it kind of changes the conversation a little bit. And she did it and it worked on me [chuckle], and so I thought that was a very clever technique that she used.

0:38:09 Bruce: Yes, absolutely, yeah and I adore these things. I adore the fact that we're having discussions now that are about trying to... That are about trying to be honest about work, about forcing us to make decisions about what to prioritize. Because for too long, we've got into this zone

where we celebrate people with hashtag hustle culture, or people who say that you should always be working.

0:38:38 Jacob: Yup.

0:38:39 Bruce: And I think it's fair say we've tried their version and it hasn't worked.

0:38:44 Jacob: What do you think of that, actually? Because I know there are some social media pundits, some social media influencers, who are very much promoting that all the time. Hustle, hustle, hustle. I work on the weekends. I only sleep four hours a day, non-stop work. And a lot of people see that and they try to emulate that, and they try to do that as well. And perhaps it causes more harm than good. So what's your thought on the whole hustle culture that we're seeing?

0:39:15 Bruce: Yeah, very... I think that's the whole point of this book, really, that we've ended up... I saw a wonderful writer in the Atlantic describe this as work-ism, that we've ended up in a situation where we've told people that the only thing they should value is working all the time. And truly, the impact of it is that people are feeling less satisfied by their jobs, they're feeling overwhelmed. Yeah. The notion of needing to hustle all the time, unfortunately, is creating a work culture, a work environment, where people are starting to finally... Starting to question what the real benefit of this is.

0:40:02 Jacob: And I gotta be honest, this is something I personally struggle with. So working for myself, having a team of 10 people that I work with, I constantly feel like I need to be working. And it's very hard, right? Because you constantly feel... And sometimes I even feel like if I have free time [chuckle], it's almost like I feel guilty, that I shouldn't be relaxing, I should be planning my next course, I should be reviewing, something planning a talk. And so this is something that I have really, really struggled with over the years, and have had to try to figure out. Even recently... And I don't know if it's maybe mental reframing, but I'll just share a story in case people are interested. I had to give a talk, recently, for an organization. And for two weeks, I was just very stressed out about this thing because they hired an agency, and there was an intermediary, and they were just very conservative. And they were picking apart my talk, and telling me, "Don't say this. Don't say that." And in my mind, I'm just thinking like, "God, this talk is gonna suck."

[chuckle]

0:41:11 Jacob: And I know I was dreading giving the talk.

0:41:15 Bruce: Yeah.

0:41:15 Jacob: And then when I finally showed up, everybody was super nice, everybody was very welcoming, everything went amazingly well. Somebody came up to me, one of the executives, and complimented me. It was... It actually ended up being a great, great talk. And so, sometimes, I think we make things worse in our head.

0:41:36 Bruce: Yes.

0:41:37 Jacob: Than they really are. And I'm not exactly sure how to fix that. At least for me [chuckle], I struggle with it. I don't know if you have any advice on that or if that fits into any one of these kinda getting out of your head.

0:41:50 Bruce: Yeah. Well no the... I think this is... These are the demons that plague all of us, and I think, especially as you say, there, we all want to accomplish as much as possible at work. I think we've all got... Increasingly, we've got into the zone where we've got college debts, and the prospect of trying to get somewhere to live seems impossible to attain. And so, as a consequence of that, we tell ourselves we're not good enough or we need to work harder, and it's, unfortunately, to the road to ruin. And work, when it's at its best, can make us happy. It can bring us satisfaction and happiness. And that became my conclusion. I thought, there are days where I have been so happy at work, so motivated, so fulfilled, and I wanna get to be back to doing that. So the idea of the book was just 30 simple ways that any of us can get ourselves out of those sort of dark thoughts into a place where we're enjoying our job again.

0:42:56 Jacob: And the really weird thing is for me when I travel... And I'm sure you travel a fair amount as well. When I travel somewhere to go give a talk, let's say it's Bali or Australia, wherever it might be, I don't work that much because I spend a lot of time kinda seeing the sights, trying food, seeing the country or the city that I'm in, and I'm very happy. And I find that I'm not doing that much work, but at the same time, nothing bad happens. The sky doesn't fall down, so to speak.

0:43:26 Bruce: Yeah.

0:43:27 Jacob: So it's a constant reminder that I think it's okay to take breaks. It's okay to step away from technology. It's okay to not always be connected, and everything will be there when you get back.

0:43:38 Bruce: Yeah. Well, the interesting thing is, that the US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the average American worker works for three hours a day. So my view is, "Okay. Well if that's the average, if I clock up four, then obviously I'm having a good day." So if you're out there in Bangkok, and you're enjoying the sights, I think give yourself a break, enjoy what's there, and maybe it will power you to do more work next time.

0:44:07 Jacob: Yup. Well, I wanna go over just a couple others that you have in some of these other sections here. The next section is sync, which is all about how to get teams to work closer together. And one of them, which I really love, and I think I've even seen companies try this out, which is moving the coffee machine. What is that about?

0:44:29 Bruce: One of the things that we've really been able to glean over the last few years is that technology has enabled us to measure far more about work than we ever were able to before, so what do I mean? Well, specifically in the same way that we might watch sports games on TV and see how the plays have taken place, see where people have run all over the field, we're actually able to track those things in work places then. So what they enable us to do they enable us to see how work actually gets done. And what we observe when we look into that is we observe that there's some things that are far more productive than we realize so it seems the person who conducted this research said that effectively meetings and emails contribute about 2% and 3% respectively of what gets done in our workplaces that's interesting but he also says that the thing that gets most done is a face-to-face conversation, really fascinating face-to-face conversation that thing that's gradually dying out in many workplaces.

0:45:44 Bruce: Face-to-face conversation seems to be one of the things that most empowers workplace productivity and I think that becomes... It just starts helping us understand what's going

on in our workplaces, that when we look into the body, when we look into the heart and we actually see that work is accomplishing things in ways that we hadn't necessarily imagined and I think for me this is a real stark realization that we need to try and optimize workplaces to get things done in different ways.

0:46:22 Bruce: Now, one of the ways that you might think that you could take advantage of that is that the people who did the same research said that the location of the office water cooler, the location of the office coffee machine seems to have much bigger impact on which teams talk to which teams than the org chart or the management structure or just how we might organize various other things in the office. So really critical, actually moving the coffee machine if you've got two teams that are aren't working together moving the coffee machine between them might be the best thing you can do.

0:47:01 Jacob: The other thing which I'm sure a lot of people would love to be able to do in their company, you said half your meetings, so cut the meeting time in half, how in the world do we make that happen?

0:47:15 Bruce: Here's the remarkable thing about meetings is that most of us find ourselves in a situation where we're having 16 hours a week of meetings but then when we... If we are honest about what we're doing in those meetings we would probably admit that we're not really paying much attention. And so we're in this situation where we find ourselves overwhelmed with just the demands upon us the fact that we're in these non-stop-meetings and I guess the critical thing that I would say is to say the evidence suggest that spending less time in meetings actually makes our job feel more rewarding, so what's the way to do that? Well, one of the ways to do that is to invite fewer people to meetings, if you've got a meeting that's got 10 people in it, could you get by with having five people in it, or could you get by with having five people and it's half the length, why, because we've got this strange thing we've... I always think that fear of missing out has nothing on FOMO which is fear of missing out of meetings. We've got this strange thing that if we hear a meeting is taking place and we're not invited to it we start thinking... We start wondering what we've done to not be invited to this meeting. And I think actually the evidence seems to suggest that if we set about to having fewer meetings and going to fewer meetings it seems to make our job not less productive but more productive.

0:48:51 Jacob: I actually love the Amazon rule, the two pizza rule I don't know if you're familiar with this?

0:48:55 Bruce: Of course, yeah.

0:48:58 Jacob: And I believe it's true because I talked to some Amazon folks there and they all kind of attested to this that no... If you order two large pizzas that's how big the team should be so that two large pizzas can feed that team and if not then the team is too big. And I think there's also a lot of issue here with maybe leaders inside of companies just don't give enough autonomy and decision-making authority that there people where they constantly feel like they need to be CC'd on everything, included in everything, so if you give your employees more decision-making power, more autonomy, more authority, maybe they'll stop CC-ing you on everything and including you in everything and that's something that I think a lot of managers can do a better job at.

0:49:46 Bruce: Truly, absolutely. Yeah, I think you're exactly right. I think getting more autonomy back into our jobs seems to be the secret sauce to make work more enjoyable for all of us.

0:49:57 Jacob: So I know we only have a couple of minutes left so I'm gonna just ask you a couple in the Buzz section and this one is around 10 Secrets of Energized Teams and they are a couple here... Well first, do you have any favorites in this section 'cause there were a couple of it I'm interested in but I do know if you have a favorite one?

0:50:15 Bruce: Yeah, I think the critical thing for me is that I talk about the importance of a team feeling relaxed and by that I mean there seems to be really strong evidence that when teams laugh together they feel more... They feel more gelled together. They feel... If you ask someone a time that they loved their job, quite often they'll describe a team that they used to laugh together, that team got on remarkably well. And it seems like there's really good evidence for this, that when teams laugh together, they, it appears to unlock endorphins in our mind. It seems to make us feel more connected to others. And I think this is a really critical component for our very best teams. Now often we can find ourselves thinking that work needs to be earnest, that work needs to be focused on the heavier side of things, and in fact allowing a team to feel relaxed and bonded with each other seems a really critical component of the best performing individuals and teams.

0:51:25 Jacob: Yeah, totally agree. Gotta, gotta relax a little bit.

0:51:28 Bruce: Yeah.

0:51:29 Jacob: Well, so the one, the one on here that particularly caught my attention was, framework is a problem that you're solving. Can you talk about that really quick?

0:51:40 Bruce: Yeah, very much so. I think when we look into how human beings tend to make decisions and tend to solve things, quite often when people feel that they might be being challenged or when our thinking becomes adversarial, or this is my opinion, versus your opinion, it generally doesn't result in the, in the best outcomes. In fact, when psychologists have looked into this, they often say that rather than coming to meetings with actions that need to have opinions on them, if we come to meetings saying, "Right, this is the thing that we need to sell". This, rather than today's bullet points, rather than today's topics, here are the problems that we've got to solve.

0:52:26 Bruce: It seems that when we look at the outcome of those meetings, people generally are more cooperative with each other. They generally feel like they're adding to each other's thinking, rather than challenging each other's thinking. It's just about re-framing it. I think that's the spirit of the whole book. These, I mean, I generally give evidence. So if you're thinking, "How do I bring this to my boss? My boss never likes new ideas", I try and bring some evidence that you can bring to your boss and then really just empower you to have a fact-filled discussion.

0:53:00 Bruce: So at the very least, you can say, "Guys, I'm thinking maybe we don't do weekend emails. Here's the evidence for this". "Guys, I'm thinking... Guys and girls, I'm thinking how about we try silent meetings"? That's another thing that I've got in here. Give them a go. The people who try them say they're transformational for their work culture. And the objective is trying to bring, I think, fact-based examples in that anyone can use to fix their work culture really.

0:53:33 Jacob: Yeah. No, I love it. I mean, like I said, I'm using some of these things in my life already and I think the tips there are fantastic. And it's, I love the way that you wrote it. Thirty hacks, thirty hacks for bringing joy to your job, which I think we can all use a little bit more of. Well, I know we're near the end of the podcast, so I just had a couple of fun rapid-fire questions for

you, if you're okay with that?

0:53:56 Bruce: Let's do it.

0:53:57 Jacob: Alright. The first one starting off, what is your greatest business failure?

0:54:04 Bruce: Yeah. [chuckle] So once I had a candidate who I was about to interview and I'd interviewed him once already. And then my boss had suggested that we interview him again a few months later. And I replied to my boss, "You know what? That guy was mediocre. I just don't think we should interview him again". And it turned out he was copied on the email, so...

0:54:29 Jacob: Oh, man.

0:54:33 Bruce: No [chuckle] It was, it was in the time when you could take the back off your phone. And I ripped the back off my phone the moment I pressed send so I'd get the battery out. I turned the WiFi router off in my house, I was convinced I'd intercepted the email going out. And then sure enough, I plugged everything back in, and it had been sent. So I had to phone him and apologize.

0:54:54 Jacob: That's a great one. I've actually heard something similar from a couple of podcast guests, but I love that.

0:55:01 Bruce: Yeah.

0:55:02 Jacob: Well, the next question was gonna be, what was your most embarrassing moment? But I feel like that can kind of tie into this, unless you have a separate embarrassing moment.

0:55:09 Bruce: [chuckle] That was definitely probably the most embarrassing for sure.

0:55:13 Jacob: Okay. What are you most proud of?

0:55:18 Bruce: Well, anyone who's written a book will tell you that they didn't necessarily enjoy writing the book, but they enjoyed having written the book. And yes, I'm delighted that I got through to the very end of writing this book.

0:55:35 Jacob: Hey, having written four, I can totally attest to that. I totally agree. The process is brutal, but when you're done, you're like the happiest person on planet Earth.

0:55:46 Bruce: Absolutely.

0:55:47 Jacob: What's the hardest business decision you've ever had to make?

0:55:52 Bruce: Yeah, I think I've always... Quite often the organizations I've worked in, they've operated with scarcity, and quite often that means that you try things and if they don't work, you have to back those down. So I've had to let a lot of people go. I had to fly to Germany one day and effectively close an office there, which was... And they were wonderful, they were just the best people, but unfortunately, it wasn't working. So that was right up there.

0:56:26 Jacob: Yeah, and I can imagine that's tough. What's your favorite business or non-business

book? Not including yours.

0:56:34 Bruce: I love "Lost Connections" by Johann Hari. It's a book that if you see it on the shelf, I mean the endorsements on it are just extraordinary. There's endorsements on the cover I think by Elton John, Hillary Clinton, by just like a super star line up of people. It's just pages and pages of remarkable endorsements. And while the book is ostensibly about depression, it's not about depression at all, it's about humanity and human connection, it's just a remarkable piece of work.

0:57:09 Jacob: I'm gonna have to check it out, I see it here, I just pulled it up on my phone. I will read that.

0:57:15 Bruce: Start with his TED talk. His most recent TED Talk, which is about depression and you'll be... I guarantee you'll be so captivated by a brilliant line of thinking that just draws you through this really compelling TED Talk that once you've watched that you'll think, "Right, I now need to spend \$6 or whatever on his books," it's wonderful.

0:57:40 Jacob: I'll check it out. Who's the best mentor you've ever had?

0:57:45 Bruce: Yeah, I personally love bosses who are very honest, I'm quite straight-talking myself probably trying to emulate that. I've had a couple of bosses who were probably quite famous in British media but less so in the US. So a great boss that I had at Google called Mark Howe. A great boss I had working in radio in a former life, called Tim Bleakley, so I adore working for those people.

0:58:15 Jacob: And very last question for you: If you were doing a different career, what do you think you would have ended up doing and why?

0:58:23 Bruce: Well, when I first left college I was desperate to work in a record company and so I spent a short time back at home after college, couldn't get a job, I wrote a four-page cartoon resume of my life. You can find some of it on Twitter, if you search for Bruce Daisley and CV, we use the word CV for resume. But I did that but my dream was to work in a record company. I love pop music, I love... I still now love cheap pop music that sits at the top of the Billboard charts. And so that was my dream job really.

0:59:04 Jacob: What's your favorite song out right now by the way? I have to ask.

0:59:08 Bruce: What do I love... This year I've loved the Lana Del Rey album I love, Charlie XAX. I love big tourist driven massive pop music.

0:59:21 Jacob: Very cool. Yeah, it sounds like... Well you're in the right place for them. You guys have a lot of great musicians [0:59:25] _____ that are coming out of the UK. Well Bruce, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to chat with me. Where can people go to learn more about you. I know you're on LinkedIn but anything else that you wanna mention for people to connect with you, please do so.

0:59:39 Bruce: Yeah, I always welcome people connecting with me on LinkedIn. My podcast and all of my details about the book are at eatsleepworkrepeat.com and there's almost 100 episodes of the podcast, some wonderful experts that I've spoken to in all manner of fields from people who run restaurants to people who have done the most captivating academic research. So I've really tried to

get into the heart of what work means and how we can make work better.

1:00:11 Jacob: I actually have a T-shirt that says Eat, Sleep, Chess, Repeat because I'm a little obsessed with the chess. So I saw the title of your book and I'm like, "This is great."

1:00:20 Bruce: Well you know where it comes from? It comes from a Fatboy Slim song, which was called Eat Sleep Rave Repeat.

1:00:26 Jacob: Ah yes, I love Fatboy Slim.

1:00:29 Bruce: Yeah, so it all derived from there, so I can't take any credit for anything.

1:00:33 Jacob: Very cool, that's good to know. Well, again, thank you so much for taking time out of your day, I really appreciate it. And for those of you listening, please make sure to check out his book. I had a chance to read an advanced copy and it's great. Again, it's called Eat Sleep Work Repeat. I also checked out Bruces' podcast, a lot of really great episodes on there and if you wanna check that out, the podcast also goes by the same name, Eat Sleep Work Repeat. Thanks everyone for tuning in and I will see all of you next week.