Twitter Thread by Paul Millerd



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1/ A thread of some of my the ideas that I keep coming back to. Will likely add to this over time. Trying to make sense of some of the things I keep coming back to.

2/ Beware of the default path

Blindly following the default paths in today's world in both life and work will lead many people down a road of guaranteed misery. You need to be able to do a bit of tinkering and build the courage to blow it up if needed

3/ Accidental meaning

A period from 1945-2000s coincided with economic growth in many places around the world that aligned with a certain way of living life that happened to work for many. Now people mistake full-time jobs for the reason why that happened and end up lost

4/ Hustle traps

The high % of people who leave full-time jobs after burnout and end up re-creating the same conditions they claimed to avoid.

5/ Doing things you want to keep doing

The only goal with work is to create the conditions such that you can do the things you want to keep doing. Easier said than done. Many people get distracted by shiny goals

6/ Don't chase passion, build savings

It's great to pursue something you love, better to get paid for a few years and then buy some more time to figure it out. Even better if you work at a place that nudges you to learn skills you actually want to learn.

7/ Money insecurity

You can't deal with money insecurity by making more money. You can only ever face it by stepping off a steady income path and existing a few months without making an income. Then you'll know what you really fear

8/ All-or-nothing leap fallacy

Too many people look at shifts as all-or-nothing leaps and compare the possible downsides with their current state (which they are already tolerating). A better way to frame it is to add in uncertain wonder + identify learnings from a half-success

9/ 4-day workweek as existential opening

The best benefit of the 4-day workweek for companies is helping them figure out what they should have stopped doing years ago. It can also be a focusing mechanism for people and make them more clear about how they want to spend time

10/ Most people don't know true leisure

We mistake vacations for leisure and leisure for "doing nothing" or passive doing. A historical version of leisure is probably a better aim for most people - contemplative about our role in the world and an active engagement with things

11/ Ikigai is a scam

Ikigai is a beautiful japanese concept but when translated to english and added to a made up 4-quadrant framework it makes people imagine that a reason for being also can be always paid for (as a job).

12/ Maslow's hierarchy is a scam

Maslow abandoned this idea before a journalist created the diagram for a business publication on employee motivation. Many people think they are self-actualized but Maslow thought this was only a stop along the way to transcendance

13/ Prestige can be a good thing

We can't avoid status games but we should actively seek communities of people or types of work in which we can win prestige in the ways that are best suited to us and dont destroy us (religious communities & volunteering)

14/ Non-doing

Non-doing, or wu-wei, is hard to explain but can be felt when we allow the need to "do" to dissolve. I'm not sure how to make this happen but when you experience this weird state it opens up a lot of life

15/ We need more creators

We shy away from creating in public because of some bad actors that abuse audiences and make sketchy claims. But this is exactly why you should create. You are hesitant to do such things and likely will bring more care to it

16/ Labor economy is less healthy over time

Middle-skill jobs are disappearing, economies are adding more low-skill jobs over time and high-skill jobs require a identification with work in $$$ cities. None of this helps people build sustainable lives & communities outside work.

17/ Work is one of the most dominant elements in our lives

You cannot ever escape work world you can only exist on the edges of it or in rejection of it. Wage-work and salary-work dominates how most adults orient towards living in the modern world.

18/ Reinvention

Reinventing ourselves and being resilient to external shocks (jobs losses, pandemics, industry stagnation, debt) is probably an underdeveloped skill. People that have a lot of lifestyle flexibility can have more freedom than high-wage employees

19/ Corporate world is good, within limits

Learn the games (power, achievement, hitting goals, politics) but don't become the game. Some CEOs only made it that far because that is all they live for. Works for some, not most.

20/ The future of work is five conversations

1. trends, academic reports, robots
2. organizational culture & meaningful work
3. gig economy, flexibility & freedom memes
4. creator economy and personal transformation
5. philosophical foundations of work & role in our lives

21/ The pathless path

Probably the best idea for sensemaking life beyond the default path. This can help protect against becoming overly identified with a role (e.g. freelancer) while staying open to the upsides of self-employment and non-work

22/ Long-term breaks from work

Probably one of the most powerful things you can do without quitting your job is take an extended break of more than 2 weeks and see what emerges. These can be life-changing for some people

23/ You cant escape culture

Many nomads and self-employed people try to reject mainstream culture but its almost impossible to escape. You have to find the things from the world you are leaving that still work for you and slowly come back to appreciate them

24/ ship, don't be a perfectionist

as you can see from the first tweet in this thread I tend to make a lot of silly mistakes. it actually can be a good thing because you attract people that are okay with imperfection and might be interested in your ideas not your polish