



OUR FRESH THINKING

## Quiet quitting vs. making a sound of change





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# Quiet quitting vs. making a sound of change

Quiet quitting is gaining momentum among today's workforce. From a simple TikTok video, quiet quitting has remarkably ballooned into a powerful global movement inundating mainstream work culture.

According to Gallup, an estimated 67% of US employees and 85% worldwide could be quiet-quitting.

Quiet quitting here champions doing the barest minimum your job requires of you – just enough to get you merrily moonwalking to the bank for your paycheck.

For many, it is justifiable work activism, especially with employers inhumanely chasing the health of their balance sheets over the health of their employees.

Many workers like the non-confrontational amplitude at which quiet quitting transmits their dissent. They don't want to take the bold and bridge-burning means of throwing a resignation at their bosses' faces.

So they prefer to do it quietly, emotionally severing themselves from their jobs, amputating their ambition for professional excellence, and almost canonizing mediocrity.

While there is no denying that the hustle culture on which corporate America was built, criminally suppressed work-life balance, is adopting a culture that glorifies averageness, is this the most effective channel for transmitting your grievances?

## SUMMARY HIGHLIGHT

While quiet quitting has become a popular trend employers are having to face, the employees taking this path should closely evaluate this act. Will it really accomplish what they are seeking? Are there better ways of gaining the workplace atmosphere desired? There's a great possibility that it won't accomplish anything, at least not positive.

Instead of quiet quitting be proactive in performing your duties at a higher level and assuming leadership roles among your peers. You are more likely to be heard (noticed) doing this than doing mediocre work in a room full of mediocrity.

Every employee has a personal brand. Assess your strength and weaknesses and focus on personal development and continuous growth to constantly maintain your brand or improve it. Go the extra mile at work. Allow your brand to open doors for you in your present job or with another employer if you must. But never sacrifice your brand.



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## How loud is quiet quitting, really?

A significant fraction of quiet quitting exponents see it as a less militarized apparatus to overhaul a global work infrastructure hinged on worker exploitation.

Quiet quitters feel they are not downing tools like the traditional labor union strikes. At least, they yet keep things running at work, however, at the barest minimum.

Therefore, it is a more virtuous and less aggressive way to renovate prevailing employer-employee dynamics, creating a more level playing ground where employees can have a holistically robust life outside work.

Agreed, the cause is just – but can the same be said of the means?

First, let us dismiss the myth that quiet quitters don't significantly hurt the companies for whom they work.

According to a TeamBuilding report, quiet quitting costs American businesses a whopping \$450 to \$500 billion annually and an estimated \$1.5 trillion globally.

Given this, we lack the moral authority to agree quiet quitting is as innocent and peaceful as its proponents package it.

But here is even the bigger question: is quiet quitting sufficiently transmitting your desire for change?

In most cases, NO!

When you quiet quit, you whisper your grievances about your work at such low audibility that the higher offices with authority to exert change can barely hear your protest.

By coasting, you entrench yourself in anonymity. This is because your results are not standing out for excellence, nor are they standing out for

underperformance to trigger an evaluation of your concern.

Effectively, you become that nameless passenger on board whose presence (or absence) doesn't make much difference.

Unfortunately, when you quiet quit, you BELLOW an identity of mediocrity at such a roaring amplitude heard internally (within your company) and externally (in the job market when you later search for opportunities).

When you quiet quit, you unconsciously solidify a reputation of indolence that could come around to haunt your personal brand at junctures of transformation in your career.

## Critical questions to ask before joining the quiet-quitting crusade

Absolutely, gleefully jumping on the quiet quitting bandwagon is immediately gratifying. You get to do far less work while earning the same paycheck.

But beyond the immediate relief of always doing the barest minimum, a more careful introspection reveals the enormity of the future price of quiet quitting.

Particularly, how damaging is quiet quitting to your personal brand?

Like it or not, professional excellence will remain the driver of career advancement. Now, professional excellence, especially for the most rewarding jobs, evaluates the positive margin between the results you delivered and that required of you.

More simply put, how well did you over-perform?

This measurement of positive margin is effective because the top companies know their

competitive edge is only sustained by bringing in over-performers.

They know that the faster the company declines, the sooner the moment they welcome people with averageness entrenched in their personal brand.

Sadly, as a quiet quitter with likely an established OKAY-guy reputation, you risk having your personal brand contaminated with a stench of averageness.

Undeniably, this occupational odor is a massive turn-off for attractive opportunities.

I admit my career enjoyed relatively speedier acceleration because it was propelled by a personal brand reeking with a voraciousness for over-performance.

I built beautiful notoriety of exceeding expectations instead of barely meeting requirements. This meant I could be trusted with extremely delicate positions of responsibility.

Does this mean I kowtowed the “aristocratic establishment” up to doing their dishes? No, I focused on consistently delivering highly competitive results and solutions.

I had opinions, too, some even frightfully rebellious.

But when these opinions diverged from those of my superiors, I found a more effective (and louder way) of transmitting them – instead of polluting my personal brand with averageness as recommended by “coasters”.

## 6.5 alternative therapy to quiet quitting

You really don’t need to quiet quit. Repositioning your personal brand is a better and louder alternative to quiet quitting.

Rather than emotionally divorcing your job and just coasting along, it is more effective to engage in meaningful work where you feel inspired (not forced) to go beyond; and where your personal brand’s growth is not encouraged.

Instead of quiet quitting, take a bold move, run or fly your brand to the open market or to another company where you can make your desired sound



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and impact.

This way, you boldly make a sound for change while strengthening your personal brand, garnishing it enough to be marketable in a super-competitive labor market.

In my book *Fresh Passion - Get a Brand or Die a Generic*, I laid out a 6.5-approach blueprint to reposition your brand in a way that invalidates the need to quiet quit.

### 1. Take the initiative

Quiet quitters are often disengaged from the roles they fulfill because they feel boxed and denied autonomy.

But from my experience in the business world, you don’t get autonomy by asking for it. You get it by showing you have earned it and can adequately manage the responsibilities that come with it.

Taking the initiative is one of the most effective means to gain such valuable autonomy. Instead of waiting for your superiors to always give you the headway, how about leading the way yourself?

If you work for intelligent superiors, they wouldn’t see it as rebellious when you complete a task (that is a natural sequence of the previous task you finished) before being asked.

If you work for progressive employers, they won’t prosecute you for always being a step ahead.

It shows you are experienced and committed enough to think ahead. This builds the necessary confidence in you that nullifies the wisdom of micromanaging you.



To secure your negotiating position when demanding change in your current position, you must prepare yourself for the option of walking away.

## 2. Stay fresh and unique

Instead of passively protesting for fairer work conditions as recommended by quiet quitting, how about holding your company by the jugular with the extraordinariness of your results?

Companies recognize top talent and would go miles to retain such. Having been in executive circles for over two decades, I personally know the chaos that reverberates among leaders when an acute risk of losing their best hands emerges.

By consistently over-performing, you illuminate yourself enough to stand out from the crowd, making your voice more distinctive from the chatter of average performers.

Such peculiarity will make your job satisfaction a principal concern among senior executives.

With the results you deliver being critical to the company's health, you gain far more bargaining rights when arguing your case.

This way, you won't hurt your personal brand by condescending to an average performer while still making your voice for change loud enough to penetrate the earlobes that matter (senior executives).

## 3. Preparing Yourself

In a battle, the side with more to lose is more prone to making concessions.

To secure your negotiating position when demanding change in your current position, you must prepare yourself for the option of walking away.

This means your personal brand must be

vocationally delicious enough for you to be a hotcake in the labor market. This entails consistently garnishing your skillsets with the latest evolutions in your space.

Your portfolio needs to be regularly "microwaved" with the latest tech skills in your space to keep you fresh and relevant in an increasingly digitized 21st-century labor market.

Regularly execute projects that show you are up to date – even if it means outside your current job. The idea is to have a sweet-smelling repertoire of experience that draws in big companies.

## 4. Staying Laser-Focused

Focus can never be over-emphasized when repositioning your personal brand. I am fanatic about going tunnel vision on your objectives and committing full-heartedly to them.

The pace at which you pursue these career objectives depends largely on the clarity you have on these objectives. Be specific and clear about the personal brand you want to communicate.

Who do you want to be known as at work?

Visualization helps in consolidating your focus. Paint a radiant mental image of your destination and regularly regurgitate it.

Also, give yourself concise, actionable, and measurable milestones. This can be in your current position or outside it. I want to deliver X by Y.

## 5. Selling Your Value

Your personal brand will rarely market itself – especially at the nascent stages of your career. You must be deliberate about promoting your personal brand.

Do some strategic window dressing, buddy!

Social media is not exclusive to partaking in the latest dance challenges and sharing memes. Your social media is a mind-blowing opportunity to showcase your professional goods.

Intentionally juicing your social media content with your career achievements doesn't hurt. The



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truth is you don't really know which eyeballs are seeing it and the amazingly powerful relationships that could be born from such posts.

Be also purposeful about building professionally progressive networks. Attend conferences and seminars and try to intermingle with valuable people in your industry.

You never know; just one recommendation can save you ten rounds of grueling interviews.

## 6. Omitting the negative

When repositioning your brand and making a loud sound for change, you must consciously fixate on the positive side of change.

Focus on growth and ignore the fears of stepping outside your comfort zone and the certainty of a consistent salary.

From my research, fear is one of the major reasons why quiet quitters lack the courage to make a louder sound for change.

What would happen if I boldly aired my opinion? Where will my next job come if I am brutally sacked?

"Ah, I will just get along and do enough to get paid", they would resolve as they jump into the quiet quitting brotherhood.

Making a loud sound for change requires strength of conviction and intentionally omitting the negative. But of course, some sprinkles of pragmatism wouldn't kill.

Therefore, it makes sense to strengthen your personal brand, sell your value, and prepare yourself so that you are best positioned to deal with the possible negatives that accompany loudly demanding change.

## 6.5. Take a walk when necessary

In a situation where a personal brand of excellence doesn't give your voice for change the loudness it deserves, you must take a walk off instead of settling for coasting.

Don't opt for the convenience of giving your barest minimum since your extraordinariness doesn't make a difference.

It is necessary to take your excellence somewhere it is valued.

And surely, there is always a place – a super-rewarding place – in the labor market for people with a personal brand exuding excellence.



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### Final thoughts

Hopefully, these points have made you reconsider any thoughts of changing your work ethic. And that is what the tug-of-war between your decision to quietly quit or grow your brand boils down to – work ethic. Work ethic is a set of values centered on the desire to work hard.

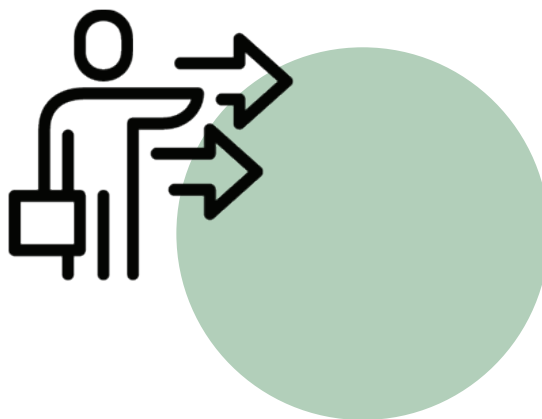
This is not to take away from one's desire to make a statement by quiet quitting or to minimize the issues that brought them to that point. Still, those with a strong work ethic apply their efforts to one employer or another. Are you willing to negatively impact your work ethic because you aren't receiving the recognition you deserve?

Why tarnish the image your peers, and possibly others you don't know to exist who can positively impact your career, have when you have more fulfilling options? You can be the leader, innovator, or initiator in your current seat whenever you are ready. You can promote yourself by letting your skills and efforts make the noise.

If you feel you are still not being heard or noticed, promote yourself and your experience in the job market, as we have discussed. But don't devalue your brand – which only hurts you, now and later – as retaliation for not getting the recognition, support, promotion, or whatever it is, making you unhappy.

Instead, use these concerns as motivation to improve your skills, experiences, and knowledge so that you add value to your personal brand. As mentioned, the side with the most to lose makes concessions.

Help your employer see your value by being a star in every task you perform. If they still can't see, then the work you did strengthening your brand only ensures another company does. But make sure what neither company sees is a negative review in your HR file because you decided to give your innate work ethic a break and coast for a while – possibly sabotaging yourself.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Michael D. Brown is a Global management expert, and award-winning author of *Fresh Passion: Get a Brand or Die a Generic*, *Fresh Customer Service®: Treat the Employee as #1 and the Customer as #2 and You Will Get Customers for Life*, and *Fresh Passion Leadership: Become a Distinct, Branded Leader or Extinct Generic*.

Michael is a sought-after speaker and thought leader on the topics of *Talent & Human Capital Strategies*, *Competitive Customer Experience*, *Laser Focus Personal Branding*, and *Profitable & Sustainable Business Growth*.

Leveraging his track record of delivering competitive commercial results, developing and executing competitive talent & human capital strategies, Michael continues to partner with organizations eager to leverage top-tier talent for transformative growth and results. Together, these partnerships lead to the Unlocking and Unleashing of World-Class Talent, enabling the achievement of ultimate potential for the individual and organization.



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