

Why We Need to Rethink Productivity Culture

You wake up already feeling behind. Before you even sit up, your mind is racing through everything you did not finish yesterday. There is a quiz to prepare for, messages you never replied to, notes still waiting to be organized, and somehow, you still feel lazy. Even when you are doing your best. Every single day.

We have been taught to treat busyness like a badge of honor. The more packed your schedule is, the more it feels like you matter. Students talk about pulling all-nighters like they are sharing survival stories. Adults compete over who is more worn out. Burnout becomes a punchline, even as most of us live inside it. But underneath all of it is a belief we rarely question: that your value depends on how much you produce.

That idea does not always shout. Sometimes, it sneaks in quietly. It starts with wanting to be more organized or make good use of your time. Then it becomes a kind of pressure that does not stop. You keep saying yes. You sleep less. You start believing that rest needs to be earned. Even the things that once brought joy, writing, drawing, and walking outside, turn into checkboxes. Tasks. Proof that you are still being 'useful.'

At some point, the purpose behind it all gets blurry. We forget how to rest without feeling guilty. We start weighing relationships by what they 'offer.' We try to turn every hobby into a side hustle. And we stop doing anything just because it feels human. Everything becomes a way to improve, optimize, or prove ourselves. And when there are no visible results, we worry we have failed.

But doing more does not always mean doing better. Growth does not always happen in the busy, frantic hours. Sometimes, it shows up on a quiet walk with no distractions. Sometimes, it begins when you finally let yourself sleep. Or when you sit in silence without rushing to fill it.

Now, maybe you are thinking: 'But I still want to succeed. I still want to work hard.' And yes, so do most people. This is not about giving up. It is about refusing to burn out before you even begin. There is a difference between being committed and being trapped in a mindset that never allows you to feel like you have done enough.

We need new ways to define success. Not by how early we wake up or how many tasks we complete, but by how present we are, how much attention we give to what matters, and how often we feel calm instead of constantly overwhelmed.



Maybe it is time we stopped celebrating overwork and started reminding each other that slowing down is not failure and rest is not laziness. Sometimes, the most meaningful thing you can do is breathe, think, and make space for yourself again. That is not stepping back. That is choosing to be fully alive.

