



DOWNTIME | Meeting Recap

‘The Paradox of Purpose,’ Matching Your Time to Your Values, and More from the CHRO Encore Event



by

Jena McGregor



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Summer is over—or nearly so. The busy fall season is here. Time for reflection and soul-searching may feel hard to find.

But back in August, CHROs gathered for M1’s second annual CHRO Encore event, a meeting in Santa Barbara, Calif. designed to focus on contemplating their next chapter: Seizing opportunities to join a board or write a book. Strategizing on financial or health longevity. Navigating the muddy middle of a pivot to what’s next.

This year’s event, hosted by Sonos Chief People Officer [Shamayne Braman](#), included conversations with [AJ Thomas](#), [Pat Wadors](#), [Kathy-Jo Payette](#), [JP Elliott](#), and more. Below, a few short outtakes from the gathering’s participants that may help as you take on the busy season ahead or contemplate the next steps in your career:

Give yourself times to feel ‘utterly bored’—and discover the absence of purpose.

It seems next to impossible to find, but it matters more than ever. One participant shared how he told a high school student who was contemplating what she wanted to do for a career and is accustomed to having their phone around 24/7 to spend the day at the library without any devices. The instructions? Pick up something that interests you. Stay until closing. Think.

“The constant ability to keep yourself entertained is a nice way of masking finding your

purpose."—attendee at the CHRO Encore event

"Lo and behold, a couple weeks later, I get this email from her: 'I never would have thought I would pick up these two or three books that really helped.' It goes to the paradox of purpose, which is, maybe, the absence of purpose. Make the room to be really bored," the attendee said. "The constant ability to keep yourself entertained is a nice way of masking finding your purpose."

He added: "One of the things I think that stops people from finding purpose is the pressure of thinking there's just one purpose and that it stays the same. The reality is things constantly change. Why don't we start with what doesn't make you bored? It'll build up from there."

Keep track of your time—and match it to your values.

Another idea: Make it an annual practice to analyze your calendar and discover how you actually spent your time. How much of it was spent working? How much of it was spent with people on your team versus external customers? How much time did you spend with your family, your health, or your personal interests?

"I write down the percent I spent on this and this, and then I go, what do I value and what's my purpose? How much of my time is spent with the things that I value, the things that I want to be attached to?" one participant said. "Sometimes I'm really surprised. I'm like, holy smoke, I spent all this time on something that isn't in line with my purpose, doesn't align with my values, and doesn't get me to [wherever] I want to get next. That is a really good exercise, because time is value. I'm exchanging my life and my time for this particular thing."

Consider how you can liberate yourself from some expectations.

One attendee spoke about spending time learning how she can do more to liberate herself, or detach herself, from expectations in four different areas: Mind, body, community, and purpose. "Who are we? What is the role? What is our identity? What does that actually look like? What are we doing physically to breathe and exercise or give our mind some quiet or be bored for a little bit? I spent my birthday this year by myself. I'm around people all the time. And I discovered painting. It was liberating for my body to express something different."

"Then there's community. For me that's a liberation from transaction. We meet so many people, we have pinging phones all the time. ... When you're in transition, how do you build a genuine trust-based community? The purpose piece is really this liberation from expectation. We have expectations of how we should be at certain stages of where we are. ... When I actually let go of what I thought my career was going to be, I was able to wake up to days that I could only have prayed for or dreamed about."