

Basic Needs First: Self-Determination and Other Determinants of a Good Work Life

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Eudaimonic philosophy suggests that we feel good and function at our best when acting in accordance with our human nature. The phrase “being well and doing well in being well” expresses this idea in brief. In psychology, the Self-determination theory has modeled the key features of eudaimonic functioning with reference to the concept of basic, psychological needs. A number of studies has shown how the fulfillment of such needs leads to better work performance and higher job satisfaction. The present talk also takes a basic needs perspective on the well-functioning work life, and it looks at some consequences of thwarted needs. The presentation is, however, critical to the use of basic needs as an explanation of work motivation. Rather it proposes that the interplay between job demands and resources may account for motivational states in general, and intrinsic motivation and work engagement in particular.