Leaders Who Library Book Discussion: *Laziness Does Not Exist* by Devon Price

- For those unable to read the book, we suggested reading [this article](#) by the author or watching [this virtual book launch](#).
- The book’s main focus is identifying and fighting to dismantle the Laziness Lie, which has three tenets:
  - Your worth is your productivity
  - You cannot trust your own feelings and limits
  - There is always more you could be doing
- “The Laziness Lie is a deep-seated, culturally held belief system that leads many of us to believe the following: Deep down I’m lazy and worthless. I must work incredibly hard, all the time, to overcome my inner laziness. My worth is earned through my productivity. Work is the center of life. Anyone who isn’t accomplished and driven is immoral.” - Devon Price
- Associating productivity with goodness is deep-seated – many participants in the discussion resonated with wanting praise for their good work and getting praise as an incentive to work harder.
- The pandemic has changed many people’s views of what constitutes being productive. Many resonated with the stress of logging a full 8 hours of telework, with the acknowledgement that when we are working in person our days are full of small breaks here and there – talking to a coworker, helping a customer, etc. helps break up our assigned tasks more.
- We discussed job creep especially amidst the pandemic -- many libraries are giving out COVID tests which puts a strain on staff who were not prepared to be frontline workers in a public health crisis. Many library workers have a story of a customer in some way admitting that they were currently positive for COVID and yet still at the library exposing us.
- Due to these points, everyone present expressed feeling burnout and a fair amount of their coworkers/staff feeling burnout as well. We discussed how modeling behavior such as limiting time that one is available via email or making sure to take all our breaks is important for a healthy work environment (or as healthy as possible amidst the pandemic and job creep). Having conversations and talking openly about the way we as library staff are collectively struggling helps us to know we are not alone.
- We collectively were interested in the concept of “cyberloafing” explored in the book – this means distracting oneself from stress and exhaustion by activities like scrolling on Facebook or shopping online.
  - "Research suggests that people tend to cyberloaf as a way to relax and reinvigorate their brains, which is essentially the same reason employees do things like chat over the watercooler or futz around in the supply closet looking for a pen they don't really need." - Devon Price
  - We tended to look at the need for tiny breaks throughout the day (such as cyberloafing) with more ease than pre-pandemic.
• We as library staff feel the pressure to be expertly well-informed in all topics, which can additionally lead to burnout. It’s impossible and unrealistic to be the go-to person all the time.
• Compassion kills the Laziness Lie:
  o Practice compassionate curiosity (what barriers are in their lives that are making people perceive them as “lazy”?)
  o Look to the broader context
  o Stop associating productivity with goodness
  o Be gentle with yourself (and others)

Recognizing and Respecting Boundaries at Work presented by Ella Alonso, a Library Associate II at Prince George's County Memorial Library System

• Ella Alonso’s contact info:
  o Email: Ella.alonso@pgcmls.info
  o Social media: @fourellaments

• When setting and recognizing boundaries that you or others set at work, it’s important to remember (using the example of eye contact):
  o Cultural diversity (what does eye contact mean in this person’s culture?)
  o Neurodiversity (how does eye contact make someone who is neurotypical feel vs. Someone who is neurodiverse?)
  o Consistency (does this person usually act this way about eye contact?)
  o Individuality (does this individual appreciate eye contact?)

• Reading body language is an important part of recognizing and respecting boundaries
  o Read gestures in clusters, context, and congruence.
  o Think about facial expression, eye movement, body posture, touch, gesture, and space (the pandemic has impacted the ability to read some of these)

• Emotional work in the workplace – when engaging in what may be an emotional or personal conversation at work, you can follow Ella’s three rules:
  o There are no concrete rules. But tread lightly.
  o Ask yes or no questions to gauge comfort.
  o People will share what they’re comfortable with.

• Feedback
  o When giving and receiving feedback, it’s important to be aware of the power dynamics at play
  o When apologizing, it should be short and consist of three things: acknowledgement, remorse/empathy, and amends. Example: “Thank you for telling me. I’m sorry. In the future, I’ll ..."