



Thoughtload: Manage the Madness and Free Your Team to Do Great Work

Liane Davey

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About working smarter and avoiding burnout, both at the personal and organizational levels, Thoughtload is an encouraging leadership guide.

Liane Davey's shrewd leadership guide *Thoughtload* is about rethinking what consumes one's time and attention.

The book examines the impact of "thoughtload," or cognitive demands, emotional burdens, and limited energy reserves, on managers and employees. It suggests such issues result in distractions, interruptions, stress, and burnout at work and proposes solutions to bring about more productivity. It outlines preemptive steps managers can take so they don't have to spend time managing conflicts and can steer clear of anxiety, negativity, and exhaustion.

The first half of the book outlines what managers can do to protect their focus and reduce energy drains, and the second half addresses what they can do to lift up their teams, such as by avoiding passing judgment or invalidating workers' thoughts and feelings. Knitted together by the overarching theory, the book's suggestions have a practical quality, with advice arising for methods like prioritizing outcomes over output, avoiding multitasking, and eschewing excessive meetings.

Indeed, as they introduce strategies to solve a series of interconnected problems, the chapters provide clear but disparate guidance on varied topics, including focusing and processing one's emotions. The chapters are short and begin with thought-provoking questions before introducing bullet-point lists of crucial information. They also include succinct summaries. This repeating structure leads to a formulaic sensibility as the book progresses, though.

Personal examples help ground the book, as do examples from various industries. There are stories about how a manager handled morale when the project they were working on for months was at risk because of cost-cutting initiatives, for example, as well as stories of tens of thousands of unread messages to illustrate overwhelm. Aphorisms, including "It's okay to visit Pity City; just don't buy real estate" and "You can't see the label from inside the jar," are also introduced.

The prose is straightforward and punctuated with humor to increase its accessibility, though its inclusion of clichés, as with references to brave knights, heavy armor, and fire-breathing dragons, is stultifying. The use of alliteration is ornamental and distracting. Still, when it comes to encouraging people to adopt healthier operational practices and personal habits to ensure that rest, restored energy, and calm minds are part of their working processes, it is convincing. Its advice on helping one's team perform with maximum productivity is persuasive, and its templates for unburdening emotions, empathizing with one's employees, and managing one's energy reserves well have appeal.

An illuminating leadership guide, *Thoughtload* is about preserving energy, improving one's focus, and boosting an organization's performance by recalibrating one's everyday concerns.

JOSEPH S. PETE (April 7, 2026)

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