

# the edmonton Specifier

Construction Specifications Canada is an organization representing diverse interests in the construction industry and related professions. It is dedicated to improving the quality and flow of information between these interests, whether in the form of specifications, contract administration or marketing.

April 2023 Edition

Editor: Tracey Stawnichy

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## INFONET

**Date:** Thursday, April 13, 2023

**Time:** 3:00pm – 10:00pm

**Location:** Edmonton Polish Hall  
10960 – 104 Street NW, Edmonton, T5H 2W6

**3:00pm Reception and Tradeshow**

**5:30pm Host Announcements**

**5:45pm Dinner**

**7:00pm Host Introductions**

**7:20pm Keynote Speaker Adam Kreek**

**9:00pm Networking**

**2023 / 2024 Edmonton Chapter Executive**

<b>Director</b>	Tracey Stawnichy	780 994 3699
<b>Chairman</b>	Andrew Brassington	587 341 5268
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Dylan Leclair	587 335 9552
<b>Secretary</b>	Jessica Prosser	587 340 7169
<b>Treasurer</b>	Catherine Osborne	780 705 7108
<b>Architectural</b>	Kevin Osborne	780 717 1007
<b>Chapter Liaison</b>	Position Open	
<b>Education</b>	Mike Ewaskiw	780 237 7844
<b>Engineer</b>	Jamie Murphy	780 983 0288
<b>General Contractor</b>	Position Open	
<b>Interior Design</b>	Corry Bent	780 995 1647
<b>Manufacturer/Supplier</b>	Mike Lafontaine	780 907 4920
<b>Marketing, Promotion, and Communications</b>	Jamie Murphy	780 983 0288
<b>Membership</b>	Dave Lawrence	780 901 7260
<b>Newsletter</b>	Tracey Stawnichy	780 994 3699
<b>Specifications</b>	David Watson	780 758 4147
<b>Website Administrator</b>	David Watson	780 758 4147
<b>Trade Contractor</b>	Kevin Kramers	587 232 0613
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<b>Sustainability</b>	Position Open	
<b>At Large</b>	Dave Lawrence	780 901 7260

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Rates cover your ad on our website 24 hours per day,  
7 days per week.

Business card on-line:

Annual \$100 if received by May 1;

\$75 if received by August 1;

\$50 if received by November 1;

\$25 if received by February 1

Add \$50 to have a link to your company web site from  
the CSC Edmonton Chapter web page.

**Chapter Sponsor****New Chapter Sponsor Bundles:**

[edmonton.csc-  
dcc.ca/About+Us/Sponsor+Opportunities+-  
+CSC+Edmonton+Chapter/](http://edmonton.csc-dcc.ca/About+Us/Sponsor+Opportunities+-+CSC+Edmonton+Chapter/)

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Contact any member of the Executive, attend one of our Chapter Meetings, send your name and address to CSC Edmonton Chapter,  
PO Box 35093 Mid Town PO. Edmonton, AB T5J 0B7, or go to [edmonton.csc-dcc.ca](http://edmonton.csc-dcc.ca) for additional contact information.

**GOALS OF CSC**

Construction Specifications Canada is a multi-disciplinary non-profit association dedicated to the improvement of communication, contract documentation, and technical information in the Construction Industry. CSC is a national Association with Chapters in most major Canadian Cities.

To this end, CSC pursues the study of systems and procedures that will improve the coordination and dissemination of information relevant to the construction process.

We seek to enhance the quality of the design and management aspects of the construction activity through programs of publication, education, and professional development, believing that by so doing, we can contribute best to the efficiency and effectiveness of the construction industry as a whole.

**OBJECTIVES OF CSC**

To foster the interest of those who are engaged in or who are affected by the compilation or use any forms of specifications for the construction industry.

To publish literature pertaining to the construction industry.

To engage in activities to improve procedures and techniques related to the construction industry.

**The opinions and comments expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the official views of Construction Specifications Canada. Also, appearance of advertisements and new product or service information does not constitute an endorsement of those featured products or services.**

## Announcements:

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*See you at INFONET!*

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## Chair's Message

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**Andrew Brassington, CSC Edmonton | Chapter Chair**

Hello Chapter Members, old and new!

I hope you all are doing well. We are finally starting to see the end of the snow and thaw out.

A lot of times we live so fast, always feeling the need to go, go, go!!

Taking time to help others and show support can go a long way. Your support has helped us put on a lot of events including the upcoming INFONET.

Let's work together to make this year a success.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at INFONET on April 13th.

Cheers!

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## Membership in CSC

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**Dave Lawrence**



In the construction industry's fast-paced environment, the need for and value of Construction Specifications Canada is greater than ever. CSC brings together individuals from all segments of the construction industry. All who have a vested interest in Canada's largest industry are invited to join CSC. When you join CSC, you become part of the only association that brings together professionals from all aspects of the construction industry.

### DESIGN TEAM

CSC offers members of the Design Team the opportunity to meet with other members and exchange information. It also affords you the chance to help improve technology and its management, and the means to improve ways in which your ideals are translated into clear, concise, and complete documentation.

### BUILDING TEAM

If you are a member of the Building Team, CSC offers you the opportunity to become involved in formulating specifications. Your valuable input into the programs can help generate time and cost savings, as well as improve performance.

### SUPPLY TEAM

The multi-disciplinary composition of CSC allows members of the Supply Team to meet with other members of the construction team. CSC programs in data filing and information retrieval are geared to present convenient and concise information on your products for proper evaluation and specification.

## THE STUDENT

If you are a student of architecture, engineering, or construction technology, CSC will provide you with a greater exposure to, and a better understanding of, the construction industry, giving you an excellent opportunity if you plan a career in the construction field.

## People and Places – Welcome to new and past CSC Edmonton Chapter Members!

### Fresh Faces (New Members)

None this month.

### Yes, We've Moved (Contact / Mailing Address Update)

#### **Mydy Chan**

Senior Architectural Technologist  
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300, 10120 – 103 Avenue NW  
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#### **Herb T. Guhl, FCSC, RSW**

Principal at Contrax  
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Email: [herb.guhl@contrax.ca](mailto:herb.guhl@contrax.ca)

### Previous Members Re-Joining / Re-Activated

None this month.

## CSC Education:



**Mike Ewaskiw, CTR, Manager, Architectural & Engineering Services, Stonhard**

### Principles of Construction Documentation

The PCD course is an introductory course that will enable the student to have a better understanding of construction documentation (specifications, drawings, and schedules), products, bidding procedures, and contracts. **It is also a prerequisite to all the other CSC education courses.**

### Specifier 1

Specifier 1 is an intermediate level course that will take the individual beyond the concepts previously introduced in the PCD Course. Although some of the same topics are included, the depth of comprehension and explanation exceed that of the PCD course. The Specifier 1 is a prerequisite for the Certified Specification Practitioner (CSP) designation from CSC. Successful completion of the course may be credited toward the experience component requirements for the Registered Specification Writer (RSW) designation.

### Technical Representative

The TR course provides a better understanding of contract documents and bidding procedures, product representation, professionalism, and ethics, and will provide a new depth of understanding and explanation of concepts beyond what was previously introduced in the PCD course. The course is designed for the individual involved in the supply section of the construction industry, such as manufacturer representatives, agents, or distributors of products. The student will have successfully completed the PCD course. Contact Mike for all your education needs.  
P: 780-237-7844 E: [mewaskiw@stonhard.com](mailto:mewaskiw@stonhard.com)

## EDUCATION COURSES

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### Upcoming Classes:

Principals of Construction Documentation (PCD) – Monday, January 16, 2023 @ ACI Architecture Specifier – TBD

Construction Contract Administration (CCA) – TBD

Technical Representative (TR) – TBD

### Upcoming Classes Online:

Principles of Construction Documentation (PCD) – TBD

Construction Contract Administrator (CCA) – TBD

Specifier – TBD

Technical Representative (TR) – TBD

### Upcoming Virtual Classes:

Principles of Construction Documentation (PCD) – TBD

Construction Contract Administration (CCA) – TBD

Specifier (SP) – TBD

Technical Representative (TR) – TBD

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### Social Media:

Check us out:



# InfoNet 2023

## What Is InfoNet?

InfoNet is the CSC Edmonton Chapter's premier event of the year that combines networking, education and inspiration. Join us for this half day experience and learn about new materials and technologies, reacquaint yourself with people in the design and construction industry and be inspired to foster some "out of the box" thinking.

## Looking To Attend?

This is a sponsor invited event. If you have yet to receive an invitation, please contact your local material representative. Alternatively you can e-mail [edmonton@csc-dcc.ca](mailto:edmonton@csc-dcc.ca) and a member of the committee will reach out to hosting tables. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any member on the InfoNet Committee.

## Website:

<https://edmonton.csc-dcc.ca/>

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## ADAM KREEK

Adam Kreek is one of North America's top executive business coaches specializing in accelerating results through leadership development, strategic planning, and values-driven achievement.

With his team at Values-driven Achievement, Adam's mission is to provide growth-oriented leaders with knowledge, tools and accountability to lead effectively, execute with confidence and deliver distinguished results.

Adam has coached, trained and taught hundreds of thousands of people and teams at organizations including Microsoft, Amazon, Pfizer, Wells Fargo, General Electric, Mercedes-Benz, Royal Bank, L'Oreal, Shell, YPO, EO, and TEDx to advance with certainty, serve fearlessly, and sustain results. Most importantly, Adam walks the talk.

Prior to executive coaching and training, Adam worked in the financial and engineering fields. A two-time Olympian, Adam holds 60 international medals, including Olympic Gold and multiple hall of fame inductions. In 2013, Adam made the first-ever attempt to row unsupported across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to America, the subject of the NBC Dateline Documentary, Capsized.

Adam's bestselling book, *The Responsibility Ethic*, teaches us the HOW of self-leadership, driving personal and professional results in individuals and organizations.

After hours, you'll find Adam raising three spirited kids with his wife, and adventuring outdoors in the Pacific Northwest. Adam holds a degree in Geotechnical Engineering and Hydrology from Stanford University, along with ECPC ACTP certification and ICF Coaching credentials.



## MEET YOUR CSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**David Watson**

**Officer – Specifications / Officer – Website Administrator**

**NBS (Canada)**



What motivated you to join the industry?

I was volun-told to join the Edmonton Chapter a new graduate of NAIT in 1985 by my father, Wayne Watson, and put to work immediately on the Specifier newsletter. The motivation was networking; to get to know people in the industry.

How long have you been in the industry?

I actually started work at Vinto Engineering (now Hemisphere) in 1980 (as a gofer). Technically didn't start until 1984, which makes 38 years. My history started in HVAC, but changed to sales, IT, and specifications over time.

What's the one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

Most people who know me know this, but I have a second 'hobby job' flying as a performer in airshows on the west half of the continent. I use the same plane my father used to own (a classic Harvard Mk 4), and my 'wingman' is my brother in another aircraft. Together we fly formation aerobatics. Our team is called Yellow Thunder ([www.yellowthunder.ca](http://www.yellowthunder.ca)). We also sell rides! 😊

What's the most interesting project you have been a part of?

I haven't worked on construction projects for a very long time, so don't have an answer to that. My history is in master specs and spec software. In my career I created a semi-smart macro software around 1990 (based on WordPerfect 5.1 macros) which used mail-merge to auto-edit specs based on a Q/A interface. We sold the rights to CSRF (the CSI Foundation in USA). The other IT project was BIMdrive spec software, which hit the market in 2010 but now phased out in favour of new web-based cloud software called NBS Chorus.

What's the one thing you'd like to see in the next 20 years?

Better integration of specifications with BIM models and using evolving technology to improve its ease of use to help its adoption. Better documents stand to make the biggest impact on our environment by improving processes. Reducing errors means reducing waste, thus reducing our carbon impact more than any other single strategy! I also see artificial intelligence (AI) as playing a significant role within 20 years – not replacing specifiers, but making better quality specifications easier.

## Articles of Interest

### Considering the God Complex in Architecture

Sourced from: <https://www.architectmagazine.com> / Sean Joyner

Adobe Stock



In architectural folklore, the master builder, faultless in all things, fit with a snappy wit, towering intellect, and the ability to spawn new worlds, has long been the archetypal hero of choice. The task of this hero has been to bestow upon the earth great gifts of architecture that would propel civilization into a new era, to be the great author of humanity's revolutionized metropolis. This archetype has become so embedded into the mythopoetic identity of architectural practice and academia that it has become the (often unconscious) standard to strive for, a

historical ideal that culminated in 20th-century Modernism with the rise of figures like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier.

Howard Roark, the hero of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, captures the prototypical qualities of the megalomaniacal Modernist in a way unique to his status as a fictional personality. He has a mythical nature that positions him beyond flesh and bone. He is an abstraction made human – more of a concept than an actual person. Roark is the embodiment of almost every Modernist architectural cliché: building for artistic self-expression, indifference toward “common” people, the belief that the greatest ethic is the self-determined one – which, for him, is always expressed architecturally – and, finally, the conviction that the architect is a transcendent arbiter of reality, and everyone must bend to his will.

The funny thing is that Roark's worst qualities are also his best. He does design prodigious buildings, he is ahead of his time, and his powers of design are undeniably superior to those around him. He is a damn good architect. But Rand makes Roark into a god-man. In the novel, when he finds that his design for a housing project has been altered during construction, Roark decides that the only way to maintain his creative integrity is to blow the building to smithereens. No one, Roark posits, shall transgress the aesthetic boundaries he has placed on his creation. It does not matter that he is only one voice in a larger enterprise or that the project would have provided shelter for those in need of it.

#### A Historical Rootedness

This Roarkian paradigm – that ideal that to be a successful architect is to be inherently stoic, mysterious, misunderstood, and all the other attributes of that archetypal folk hero – existed well before Roark. Roark is merely a manifestation of a metaphysical construct we have inherited through the ages around humanity's relationship with and use of architecture. As I see it, the paradigm is responsible for the romanticized egoism that permeates much of the architectural profession.

Social ethics are playing a more significant role in the profession than what we've traditionally seen in Modernist purism and formalism. And Roark is inherently someone who transcends any larger sense



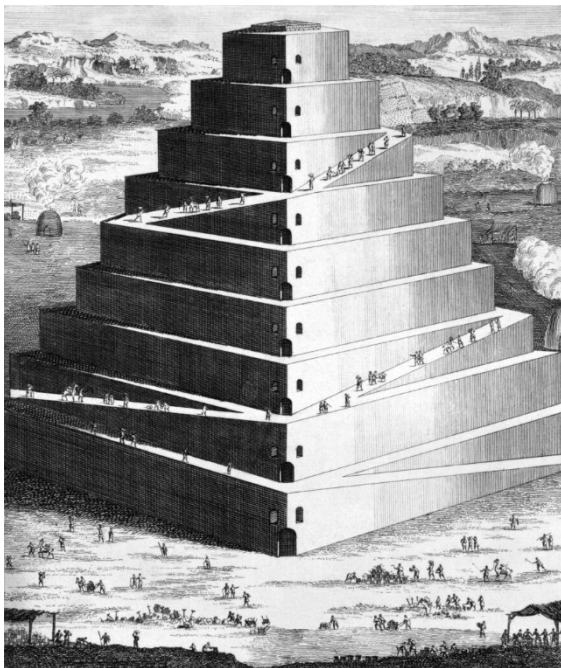
of ethics. He creates his own. In some ways, we can call that noble, but there's no denying the identarian effects figures like him, fictional and otherwise, have had on architects' sense of self. It was famed historian and writer David McCullough who said, "History is who we are and why we are the way we are." With that in mind, it is worth considering how a historical study into the relationship between architecture and an individual "god-man" might help us understand where some of these ideas about architectural identity came from.

### **The Tower of Babel and the Lust to be Seen as Great**

In the Book of Genesis, we are told that the descendants of Noah settled in the land of Shinar, where they decided to build a new city and a tower "that reaches to the heavens." The people, the text tells us, set out to build the tower to make a name for themselves and centralize their community so they would not be "scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Upon observing the people's progress in constructing the tower and determining that they must be stopped, God scrambles their language "so that they [did] not understand each other." And, as the text reads, "the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city."

A depiction of the Tower of Babel



I'm most interested in the people's declaration of why they want to build the city and the tower. "Let us make a name for ourselves," they say. They want to broadcast their greatness and power, which, in this context, is a display of arrogance, self-sufficiency, and even spite toward God. The first-century Jewish Roman historian and military leader Titus Flavius Josephus writes about the story in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, suggesting that it was Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, who convinced the people to build the tower. Nimrod, Josephus says, "excited [the people] to such an affront and contempt of God." He wanted to turn the people away from God and moved to do so by gradually setting himself up as a tyrant, conditioning the masses to be solely and constantly dependent on his power.

In this light, the Genesis narrative might not just be about hubris but rather a warning of the potential outcomes of it, what Josephus suggests are the beginnings of what could later become a centralized tyranny. That means God's act of scattering the people was not only an act of rebuke but also one of salvation.

And though Josephus's text doesn't plainly say this, it implies that Nimrod facilitates and administers his power through the very metropolis he coerces his people to build. He uses architecture as a means by which to solidify his power, to establish himself as a god among mortals.

### **Julius Caesar and the Power of Architecture**

As early as 54 B.C., Julius Caesar had begun planning several building projects across Rome. One of his first projects was the Basilica Julia, which would eventually sit on the southwest side of the Roman Forum near the Temple of Saturn. It was more than 300 feet long, paved with marble, and adorned with artwork. "As was Caesar's intention," writes Phillip Freeman in *Julius Caesar*, his 2008 biography on the Roman statesman, "it came to dominate the Forum as a center of activity and constant reminder of his benevolence (emphasis mine)." Caesar also planned a new forum bearing his name near the Capitoline Hill, further embedding himself in the stone of Roman life and society.

Caesar loved Rome and wanted it and its people to prosper, but he wanted absolute power in realizing his vision. He eventually attained the power he wanted, solidifying – like Nimrod – much of his dominion over the populace through the commissioning of great works of architecture throughout the city.

Soon, Caesar, to the repulsion of several Roman senators, began to entertain the suggestion that he was a kind of demi-god, something not uncommon for monarchs in the ancient world but thought blasphemous by the Romans. After his rise to power, several honors were bestowed upon the dictator, including the inscription *Deo Victo* (“to the unconquered god”) in the temple of Quirinus.

As Freeman writes: “Caesar surely knew that hubris, the arrogance of the king who thinks himself equal to the gods, was a favorite subject of Greek drama. But as a supposed descendant of the goddess Venus through her son Aeneas, Caesar may have genuinely come to believe he deserved divine honors.”

In the end, Caesar had so much power and was seen as such a danger to the future of Rome that he was stabbed to death by his own Senate. His assassination sent Rome into a series of civil wars, ultimately resulting in the end of the Republic and marking the beginning of the Roman Empire.

There is no denying that Caesar did immeasurable good for Rome and its people, especially those in the middle and lower classes, who were heartbroken and angered by his demise. But he had been accountable to no one, and his contemporaries were simply lucky that he was not a Nero or a Caligula.

### **Caesar, Nimrod, and Architecture’s Utility**

Caesar and Nimrod illustrate the way in which architecture can be used to display and justify one’s self-perceived divine nature. While they are only two examples among countless throughout world history, both show us how architecture, because of its scale, sense of permanence, and the resources it commands, is in a uniquely intimate relationship with power. As such, the notion of an architect with a god complex, convinced of their superiority as a direct result of their ability to create architecture, seems a plausible and perhaps even inevitable phenomenon.

The ambitious statesman, while not a designer, employs design as a means to restructure the world we all live in. The Roarkian types in architecture, while not monarchs (or statesmen), are complicit in that same restructuring – and with figures like Le Corbusier – can sometimes allow themselves to act as monarchs. That top-down mentality is the default position in much of architectural discourse, and since we all share this world, one mind simply cannot be the sole decider for how the rest of humanity will live.

### **How to Become a God**

The charge is not that all modern and contemporary architects suffer from a god complex but that those who adopt this divine posture are not at odds with the Roarkian aspirational ideal that exists in our architectural folklore. Adopting a god complex is consistent with the archetypal master builder ideal.

Roarkian philosophy depends on an individual being able to set themselves up above others with the sincere and delusional belief that their siloed thinking and creative ability will somehow benefit all of humanity. And while that may very well be the case in some instances – Caesar, for example, was a genius who arguably and singlehandedly revolutionized Roman society – the dangers of such a belief, acted out, can be disastrous (as with Hitler, Mao, or Stalin).

Architects today have no choice but to work within a thicket of red tape, bureaucracies, and personalities to get anything built. When some believe it is their birthright to adopt this Roarkian

persona, they may try to assert it among peers and colleagues. If the architect does not get the expected level of reverence directly from their professional equals, it seems the only alternative is to establish themselves as gods among those who are much easier to gain authority over – subordinate workers and students.

### The Real-Life Roarks

There is a popular story of when an angered client called Frank Lloyd Wright to complain about an incessant leaking skylight that was raining down on his desk. In response, Wright dryly suggested the client move the desk. Such stories are common in modern architecture. Richard Meier, FAIA, was awarded the 1984 Pritzker Prize for “his single-minded pursuit of the essence of modern architecture.” The Roarkian paradigm always celebrates single-mindedness. The architect is always presented as the sole genius who bestows creative gifts upon the world.

I like many of Meier’s buildings. His single-mindedness has produced, in my opinion, some significant architecture, even if it has become subservient to the profile of a personal brand. But, we also cannot ignore the many allegations of sexual misconduct against the man, as reported in The New York Times – egregious offenses that force us to wonder if Meier, too, saw himself as a god, free to bend reality to his will, no matter the cost to those around him.

Wright and Meier each committed transgressions on vastly different scales. I am not equating the accusations against Meier with Wright refusing to admit he made a mistake. I am pointing out the psychological and philosophical seeds that produce these behaviors, which can create toxic workplaces or unethical academic environments.

### Getting Beyond Roark

The antidote to the Roarkian paradigm is not for us all to become parroting architectural collectivists. Variation and diversity (in every sense of the word) are what make this world beautiful. History has shown us that we can’t simply pummel through life, demanding everyone abide by the reality we deem appropriate. Roark’s positive attributes seem clear to me: The architect should strive to practice their craft with the utmost excellence and pursue individual growth and development in that endeavor. But the architect is also a member of a society, neither superior nor inferior to the rest of us, but embedded and interdependent.

The Xylem in Fishtail, Mont., by Kéré Architecture / Image courtesy of Tippet Rise/Iwan Baan, Photo by Iwan Baan



To transcend the age-old doctrines that got us here, it seems to me that the architect must acknowledge the most obvious of existential truths – our shared humanity. We might look to Burkina Faso’s German architect and 2022 Pritzker Prize laureate Francis Kéré, Hon. FAIA, as the anti-Roark, and a potential model for this more humanitarian approach.

Kéré’s first project was the Gando Primary School, completed in 2001 in Gando, Burkina Faso. Before Kéré’s project, the village of Gando had no school, which limited the ability of the villagers to capitalize on the benefits of

having a physical school building. But when Kéré returned to his village from Europe, he didn’t just import the “best” materials, tell the villagers how things were going to be, and have them sit by and



watch him erect the new building. He used local labor and materials, and had the villagers contribute to the construction by molding clay and using other resources from the surrounding area to construct the school.

### **Integrating the Architectural Self**

The 2022 Pritzker jury noted how Kéré “has developed a sensitive, bottom-up approach in its embrace of community participation. At the same time, he has no problem incorporating the best possible type of top-down process in his devotion to advanced architectural solutions.” The lesson from Kéré is that the architect, in essence, cannot avoid some degree of “top-downness.” A vision must be cast. It should not be undermined that the architect does maintain a level of knowledge and expertise that the non-architect does not possess and needs in order to cultivate a developing world through architecture. Like Roark, Kéré devises “advanced architectural solutions,” and from the excellence displayed in his work, evidently holds himself and his team to a high standard.

Kéré has integrated this “best possible top-down process” with a bottom-up approach that acknowledges and embraces his shared kinship with the people he is designing for. He gives us a picture of how the architect can be ingenious and genuine, contrarian and collaborative, masterful and meek. The architect, it seems to me, must be a formidable professional, but also, an even more exceptional human.

Visual artist and Macarthur fellow Teresita Fernandez summarized this idea perfectly in her 2013 commencement speech to the graduating class of her alma mater, Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of the Arts. Closing the speech, she reminded the graduates that it is their character, in the end, the matters above everything else:

“Being an artist is not just about what happens when you are in the studio. The way you live, the people you choose to love and the way you love them, the way you vote, the words that come out of your mouth, the size of the world you make for yourselves, your ability to influence the things you believe in, your obsessions, your failures – all of these components will also become the raw material for the art you make.”

In the same way, being an architect is not just about what happens in the studio, and that, ultimately, is about who the architect is as a person. How they behave and position themselves toward society, can, in fact, become the raw material for the architecture they make, for both themselves and the people they are in service of.

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## **4 Ways to Normalize it's OK to Step Away From Work, Even During Working Hours**

Sourced from: <https://www.fastcompany.com> / Jenn Lim

We all know what it feels like to fight sleep. A proposal is due first thing the next morning, a toddler is still fussing, or there’s a weird noise at the window. But eventually, even the most vigilant guard dog can’t stay on guard anymore.

In a lot of ways, that’s what disconnecting from work—truly unplugging—can feel like. It’s counterintuitive because there’s more work to do. It’s uncomfortable because there might be judgment or guilt attached. Even though we know our minds and bodies need to recharge, we still fight it. But eventually, our bodies give in because they know it’s unsustainable.

The truth is that our nervous systems have been in this state since the world got 2020’d. According to Gallup’s State of the World’s Workplace report, stress and anxiety levels are still at an all-time high.

Source images: visualsUnsplash: Mike Benna/Unsplash



Some of us have acknowledged it, while others are ignoring it to focus on getting through another day. It's as if we're in a horror movie to stay awake to survive, but instead of a two-hour film, we've been watching this for almost three years.

People have been scaling back to only "working their wage" or outright resigning to focus on more important things in life. There's a longer-term trend of a "cry for help" coming at all levels. CEO and employees are prioritizing their well-being over careers for the first time. The symptoms of burnout and poor mental health already existed; 2020 just lifted the hood to lay all to bare.

As we're entering yet another cycle of uncertainty—hiring freezes, layoffs, recession—we're dialing in harder. But instead of pushing ourselves to work faster and longer as if we're automatons, a better method to yield results would be to hit pause, unplug, and reboot.

Here are four ways to disconnect to reconnect.

### **Encourage and Model OOO by Truly Going Offline**

Go beyond the email autoresponder, resist temptations to check in, and honor it for your team with intention.

Jen Fisher, Deloitte's chief well-being officer, walked her talk with an OOO email that everyone could relate to. Knowing that checking emails is the top reason why people don't fully disconnect while on vacation, she shared specific ways to help and ended it with, "Thanks for helping to support...[for] ease of re-entry upon my return. You can count on me to support you in the same way!" Fisher was accountable for her actions and mindful of how they might impact others.

Openly share and encourage different ways to go offline, so people can choose what fits them best. Using email schedulers, turning on "do not disturb," and removing unnecessary apps from the phone should no longer be seen as taboo.

The bottom line is even a short disconnect can reduce stress, especially if you're completely off the grid and your thumbs aren't twitching to see what you're missing. By modeling, you're instilling a sense of trust that they've got your back, and you've got theirs when they decide to recharge, too.

### **It's Not Enough to Just Unplug Once in a While. We Need to Lather, Rinse, and Repeat**

Encourage people to dial into what replenishes them (or, as I say, what nurtures their greenhouse). Maybe that's taking up pickleball, spending intentional time with friends and family, or helping a stranger in need. And don't just encourage it once, do it twice and beyond—be invested in continual experimentation.

The takeaway here is to keep testing what works best. Studies show that trying different things can fulfill us because we're activating our brains in new ways. Note the difference between what you felt before and after, then decide if it's something worth continuing.

Just remember someone's meditation practice might not be another's cup of turmeric tea. Everyone's different when it comes to what gives them a sense of unplugged peace. Today's workplace has forever changed, and the key is to support people in testing what works best for them.

It's like any investment we make. If we don't see the value of it, we're not going to keep adding to it. Consider it a well-being (or wholeness) fund, generating an ROI that affects our mental health and how we work/live. It's something we all know we need but "don't have time" to get to. But if we feel the benefits for ourselves and the people we love, it's more likely time will be made for it.

### **Encourage Employees to Unplug *During* the Workday**

We know multitasking is not where our best work happens. The more task-switching we do, the more it impairs our cognitive ability, with up to a loss of 40% productivity and, ultimately, burnout.

Now that the hood's been lifted let's keep naming what's underneath—the workplace can be a major source of our stresses. In a recent bold move, the U.S. Surgeon General reinforced that.

When we unplug and replug in throughout the day, our tanks won't get fully depleted. We need to allow ourselves and others the flexibility to set aside time for deep work and to reset throughout the day. Create daily scenarios where skills are met with the opportunity to plunge into a state of flow.

It's easier to stick a health warning on a pack of cigarettes than on a company's front door. But if we can unplug throughout the day—whether it's just 5 minutes or 30—we can sustain a higher, healthier, and more productive level of work.

Here are a few actionable scenarios you can encourage your team to hit play on during the work day:

**Focus Time:** Similar to how we have "do not disturb" (DND) on our phones, we need to add DND (or, simply put, focus time) to our calendars. If we don't take intentional time to unplug and make room for uninterrupted deep work, that space will be too easily sucked up into something else.

Test new techniques like the Pomodoro until you find ones that fit you and your habits best. Get into states of flow by making routine tasks more interesting or challenging. It's no longer a badge of honor to be doing five things at once to expedite your burnout.

**Get out of your chair:** Use an app or timer to remind yourself to move. Take a five-minute walk around the office (or home office), have a spontaneous dance party, do some light stretching, or maybe take 10 to get outside. I downloaded the Plum Village app that has a "mindfulness bell" that tolls at the top of every hour. It reminds me to stand up and take a few deep breaths whenever I can. It's like taking a shot of oxygen and I feel refreshed.

**Give yourself a buffer time between meetings:** Instead of scheduling 60-minute meetings, try 50-minutes allowing yourself a 10-minute buffer. Give yourself ample space to organize your thoughts,



plan next steps, or take a loo break. It will give you a chance to reset and refocus, so you can be fully present for your next meeting or task at hand.

**Feed your brain:** We often get so engrossed in what we're working on that we forget to eat or we stuff something (healthy or not) down before the next call, making us crabby, hangry, and foggy. Set a timer or block out lunches on your calendar and grab some real grub. Take a real lunch break by eating outside or inviting a friend you haven't seen in a while.

**Take a moment of gratitude:** Instead of focusing on all that's wrong with your day, take just a minute or two to jot down something that went well with your day. If it involves someone else, let that person know, so they'll share a moment of unplugging and gratitude, too. The adage is true: happiness never decreases when shared.

### Test the Four-Day Work Week

The latest results of what a four-day workweek can do for organizations have been making a TGIT (Thank God it's Thursday) news splash. In a six-month study of 33 companies in the U.S. and Ireland, none are returning to a five-day workweek (with two on the fence). They reported an average revenue increase of 38%, and employees wanted to continue the four-day workweek with a reported decrease in burnout.

As my CMO, April Jones (a mom of three, wife, and entrepreneur), explains,

*"The four-day workweek allows me to honor how I spend my time more efficiently. I can show up fully in the hat I'm wearing without heart palpitations of trying to do it all. It's not about giving less to any role but about organizing my time to bring my whole, healthier self to each."*

The jury may still be out for companies to fully adopt the four-day workweek, but the message is it's worth testing new ways of working. A one-size-fits-all solution won't ever exist, but employees are looking for autonomy, flexibility, and trust to operate in ways that work for them. The likelihood is that employees with more time to nurture their greenhouse will show up more energized to take on the next unpredictable challenge that comes our way.

If we've learned anything since 2020, there's a new era of the way we work, and the demand for workplaces to be more human is overdue. As leaders, we need to go beyond acknowledging that people's work/life priorities have changed; we need to understand and support them, too.

The best next step is to ask and listen attentively to our teams: What does it mean to truly unplug and reenergize to you? Ask with psychological safety (without fear of judgment) and a reminder that it's coming from a place to align our values, behaviors, and a sense that we're genuinely in this together.

We can start by hitting reset tomorrow, disconnecting from what was old and tired, and reconnecting in new ways that reengage us all. Making work more human is the advantage, so let's lead like it is.

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## London, Ont. Building Collapse Survivor Dedicates Career to Changing Site Safety

Sourced from: <https://canada.constructconnect.com> / Dan O'Reilly

It's been a long and hard road for construction worker Jacob Hurl, who was trapped for four hours and narrowly escaped being killed in the wake of a partial building collapse in London, Ont. in December 2020.

Two of his co-workers at the construction site of an apartment building on Wonderland Road were killed.

They were Henry Harder, 26, who had a daughter who was only three weeks old at the time, and John Martens, 21.

Four others were injured, including Hurl who suffered severe injuries and was the last worker to be pulled out alive.

“Physically, I’m still recovering by going to the gym three to four days a week. Mentally, I’m still seeing a therapist once a week walking through that day,” says the 24-year-old.

JACOB HURL – Jacob Hurl is studying to become a project manager through online courses with George Brown College and has also given himself a mission to be a workers’ rights advocate.



At the same time, however, Hurl has embarked on a new career path to become a project manager through online courses with George Brown College and has also given himself a mission to be a workers’ rights advocate.

In the aftermath of the collapse, he spent several months considering what his options were and what he was going to do with his life.

“I thought about office jobs, I thought about construction. I thought about my fellow blue-collar workers and about my friends. Then I realized I can’t leave this (construction) industry without making the changes that are needed.”

He is referring to both the day-to-day operations on construction sites as well as how he believes injured workers are treated by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

“As a project manager I know I don’t have a huge amount of power, but enough to make a small change,” says Hurl, who describes himself as a “natural leader.”

It is an ability he discovered in high school while playing sports, especially football, and he obtained a number of scholarships with an American university but decided not to take it.

Last September he enrolled in George Brown College’s one-year-long online project management

program. Some of the courses, which include cost control, construction administration and estimating, are conducted at set times, while others require a considerable amount of reading which he can do on his own time.

His objective is to acquire five to seven years solid experience as a project manager, followed by a possible move to becoming a building inspector for a similar period and then attain a position as a Ministry of Labour inspector.

“Basically, my goal is to learn all these systems, study how they operate, and eliminate the bad from the good in the industry.”

By “bad” he means some of the unsafe working conditions he has witnessed and participated in, such as the time he spent constructing a catch basin without a trenchbox and with the use of a ladder with only eight rungs instead of 12.

The progression from injured construction worker to student has been made through WSIB’s Return-to-Work progress, which Hurl describes as a “little hidden gem” because it provided funding for his medical rehabilitation and studies.

The Lucan, Ont. resident maintains he has an obligation to stand up for injured workers and has commenced preliminary steps in creating a podcast to champion their rights.

But first, he is focused on completing his studies.

“I believe it’s going great and I’m enjoying the majority of the content in the course,” he says.

College instructor Bill Hawryschuk, who tutors Hurl with his estimating, planning and scheduling courses, concurs and says his student makes a strong effort to understand the course material.

“It’s an ongoing process where I evaluate where he is in a course, and where he needs to go, and then I fill the gaps with tutoring to help him move forward and to succeed. I’m impressed that his goal is not just to pass, he wants to understand the concepts and processes in order to be as job-ready as possible for when he re-enters the workplace as a project co-ordinator or junior project manager.”

In the investigation that followed the building collapse eight charges were laid against iSpan Systems LP and East Elgin Concrete Forming Ltd. under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act. On Jan. 13 the matter was adjourned to March 3 to be spoken to, according to information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

## ASSOCIATION LINKS

- **Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA)**  
[www.acsa-safety.org](http://www.acsa-safety.org)
- **Alberta Building Envelope Council (ABEC)**  
[www.abecnorth.org](http://www.abecnorth.org)
- **Building Information Modeling (BIM) Forum**  
[www.insightinfo.com/bimforum](http://www.insightinfo.com/bimforum)
- **Biomimicry Guild**  
[www.biomimicryguild.com](http://www.biomimicryguild.com)
- **Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC)** [www.cagbc.org](http://www.cagbc.org)
- **Architecture 2030**  
[www.architecture2030.org](http://www.architecture2030.org)
- **BuildingSMART Alliance** (North American Chapter of BuildingSMART):  
[www.buildingsmartalliance.com](http://www.buildingsmartalliance.com)  
**BuildingSMART International (formerly IAI)**  
[www.buildingsmart.com](http://www.buildingsmart.com)
- **Biomimicry Institute**  
[www.biomimicryinstitute.org](http://www.biomimicryinstitute.org)
- **Canada BIM Council**  
[www.canbim.com](http://www.canbim.com)

- **CCDC Documents**  
[www.ccdc.org/home.html](http://www.ccdc.org/home.html)
- **Construction Specifications Institute (CSI)** [www.csinet.org](http://www.csinet.org)
- **International Construction Information Society (ICIS)** [www.icis.org](http://www.icis.org)
- **OmniClass**  
[www.omniclass.ca](http://www.omniclass.ca)  
[www.omniclass.org](http://www.omniclass.org)
- **Uniformat**  
[www.csinet.org/uniformat](http://www.csinet.org/uniformat)
- **Institute for BIM in Canada (IBM)**  
[www.ibc-bim.ca](http://www.ibc-bim.ca)
- **Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) – Alberta Chapter:**  
[www.cagbc/chapters/alberta](http://www.cagbc/chapters/alberta)
- **Construction Specifications Canada (CSC)**  
[www.csc-dcc.ca](http://www.csc-dcc.ca)
- **buildingSMART Data Dictionary**  
[bsdd.buildingsmart.org](http://bsdd.buildingsmart.org)
- **MasterFormat**  
(<https://secure.spex.ca/siteadmin/freedocuments/images/1.pdf>)
- **buildingSMART Canada**  
[www.buildingsmartcanada.ca](http://www.buildingsmartcanada.ca)
- **Ace BIM**  
[www.acebim.ca](http://www.acebim.ca)

## ASSOCIATION LIAISONS

Alberta Association of Architects (AAA)  
<http://www.aaa.ab.ca/>

Alberta Painting Contractors Association (APCA)  
[www.apca.ca](http://www.apca.ca)

Alberta Wall & Ceiling Association (AWCA)  
<http://awca.ca>

Alberta Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA)  
<http://www.arcaonline.ca>  
[info@arcaonline.ca](mailto:info@arcaonline.ca)

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)  
<http://www.ashrae.org/> / [ashrae@ashrae.org](mailto:ashrae@ashrae.org)

The Canadian Wood Council (CWC)  
<http://www.cwc.ca>  
[info@cwc.ca](mailto:info@cwc.ca)

Portland Cement Association  
[ConcreteTechnology@cement.org](mailto:ConcreteTechnology@cement.org)

Interior Designers of Alberta  
[www.interiordesignalberta.com](http://www.interiordesignalberta.com)

Alberta Painting Contractors Association (APCA)  
[www.apca.ca](http://www.apca.ca)

Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA)  
<http://www.apegga.org/> [dward@apegga.org](mailto:dward@apegga.org)

Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET)  
<http://www.aset.ab.ca/>  
Russ Medvedev, [russm@aset.ab.ca](mailto:russm@aset.ab.ca)

Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)  
<http://www.bomaedmonton.org/> / [edmonton@boma.ca](mailto:edmonton@boma.ca)

Consulting Engineers of Alberta (CEA)  
<http://www.cea.ca/> [info@cea.ca](mailto:info@cea.ca)

Edmonton Construction Association  
[www.edmca/.com](http://www.edmca/.com)  
[contact@edmca.com](mailto:contact@edmca.com)

Terrazzo, Tile & Marble Association of Canada (TTMAC)  
<http://www.ttmac.com/>  
[association@ttmac.com](mailto:association@ttmac.com)

## Bulletin Board

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### Message from the Executive:

We in the Executive are looking for creative-minded individuals who can take on a position and follow through with ideas...if this is YOU, send a message to [information@csc Edmonton.ca](mailto:information@csc Edmonton.ca) and we will be quick to get back to you!




















### Open Positions Include:

Chapter Liaison  
Sustainability  
Contractor's Rep

You don't need to be a member of the Committee to come and participate in our monthly Chapter meetings but watch out if you do! You may find yourself holding a position...maybe even as Chapter Chair...



## The Executive

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