

Work

Work is organized social activity, directed at removing obstacles, facilitating projects, or guaranteeing security. (Work can of course be carried out either effectively or ineffectively; good work requires good planning.) Work can be undertaken in mind, as when a painter designs, in his/her mind or imagination, something that wants depicting or reimagining. Work can be undertaken in body, as when one undertakes a clean-up project in his front yard, removing trash from the lawn and carting it away. There is no way to replace work with anything else.

The basic components of work invite work with the self, as well as work with mind and body. The self, here, means the spirit, that which must be motivated in the first place, in order to trigger the entire work project. We have images of individuals who lack the motivation to undertake a work project. We might call them unmotivated or lazy. They may or may not be. They may not find the open space within where they can move around the components of a project. Many forward looking intentions belong to work projects, and they must all be present before the project can launch.

The object of a work project, say the battered garbage can that has been bugging me in the alley, and which badly needs removing, has its moments. At such times I ask myself why I have not yet removed it. I fret. But I am reading. Work is what I am not doing. Is work what I plan to do? Or is work a framework for thoughts about work? Work is something you do, and that changes the positions of things in the world. Work is usually optional, which is why we commend people who work hard.