**How to 'quiet quit,' from a former teacher who did it for 2 years so she could enjoy a better life while still getting a paycheck**

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* Maggie Perkins, 30, engaged in "quiet quitting" while working as a teacher beginning in 2018.
* She actually quit in 2020 because "the conditions were not sustainable to have a quality of life."
* Now, she's trying to help others avoid burnout while staying engaged and collecting a paycheck.

Maggie Perkins loved being a teacher.

"I want to be a teacher every day of my life, for the rest of my life," the 30-year-old told Insider. "It's what I enjoy most."

But her passion didn't stop the burnout that came from working 60-hour weeks on [a salary](https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/DeKalb_Salary_Schedule_2014-15) that stayed under [$50,000](https://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/icymi-governor-ron-desantis-announces-pay-raises-for-florida-teachers.stml) for five years. In 2018, she decided she needed a change and began engaging in what's recently become known as "[quiet quitting](https://www.businessinsider.com/quiet-quitting-answer-corporate-burnout-tiktok-yes-2022-8)."

The term, which gained traction after Insider published a story on "[coasting culture](https://www.businessinsider.com/overachievers-leaning-back-hustle-culture-coasting-employees-work)" in March 2022, describes the not-so-new idea of establishing work-life boundaries while still collecting a paycheck. Its growing popularity on [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/search?q=%23quietquitting&t=1660663377706) shows how millennial and Gen Z workers are pushing back on the expectation that they should go above and beyond what they are paid to do. But the idea is older than these young generations and echoes the "[work to rule](https://www.geouaw.org/work-to-rule-frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text=Work%2Dto%2Drule%20is%20not,a%20strike%2C%20which%20breaks%20them.)" tactic that unions have used, in which workers do what they are contractually obligated to and nothing more.

## **From 'quiet quitting' to 'career cushioning,' here are the workplace trends that took 2022 by storm — and whether they'll continue in 2023**

* Many workers have seen work-life balance undergo massive upheavals since the start of the pandemic in 2020.
* Experts have tried to explain a changing feeling about work with phrases like "quiet quitting."
* Check out some of this year's biggest workplace trends and what experts expect in 2023.

This has been the year of workplace buzzwords.

Many people have seen their work-life balance undergo a massive upheaval since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, leaving many workers with whiplash.

"In the past, employers have had all of the cards. What's interesting now is salaries are going up, and benefits are going up," said S. Chris Edmonds, an executive consultant and CEO of the Purposeful Culture Group.

"Team members finally have a bit of power," he added.

However, in recent months, some of that power may have shifted back to employers, said Jessica Kriegel, chief scientist of workplace culture at Culture Partners.

Many workers are being asked to return to in-person work after years of working from home, while others fear impending layoffs. Experts say the wild swings in power dynamics have changed how employees feel about work in the US.

"One of the things I'm paying attention to is the ever-growing anti-work sentiment that seems to be happening," Kriegel said.

Experts and the press have tried to explain this changing feeling with alliterative phrases like "quiet quitting" and "career cushioning."

Kriegel said many phrases are "new ways of describing old dynamics."

Alexandra Levit, the author of "Deep Talent," echoed a similar idea.

"People have always been unhappy at work," she said. "But I think there has been an accelerated trend of burnout this year."

Here is a look back at some of the biggest workplace trends of 2022 and what experts say we should expect in 2023:

Through the "[Great Resignation](https://www.businessinsider.com/wrong-great-resignation-recession-means-workers-powerless-despite-labor-shortage-2022-7)," many workers have wielded the power to [quit their jobs](https://www.businessinsider.com/millions-americans-quitting-jobs-may-jolts-recession-great-resignation-2022-7) and pursue more attractive opportunities to get higher pay and more flexibility. Now, however, the quiet-quitting trend suggests workers are trying to find [ways to make their current jobs work for them](https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-quiet-quit-set-clear-boundaries-work-2022-8).

Perkins quit in 2020 and said she doesn't have any plans to return. She's pursuing her Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Practice and focusing her research on teacher attrition — specifically, why teachers with significant qualifications and experience ultimately choose to leave the profession.

## **Start slow and prioritize what must get done to keep your job**

As a teacher in private and public schools in Georgia and Florida, Perkins said she spent "hundreds if not thousands" of her own dollars a year on classroom supplies, dealt with harassment from parents, and developed "horrible" migraines.

"It's like a frog in boiling water," she said. "It eventually becomes unsustainable. And either you burn out, or you have to make a choice."

Perkins advises would-be quiet quitters to "scale back slowly" and "quietly" — not drawing too much attention to the change.

"It can't be overnight," she said. "If you've been the teacher who carries home a ton of work and stays late, it will be incredibly noticeable if you just do this suddenly," adding that one needs to do it in a way that's "sustainable and not going to get you fired."

In 2018, Perkins began leaving school after working her exact number of contracted hours to pick up her daughter from daycare. This laid the groundwork for some work-life balance, but between grading, lesson planning, and meetings, she said she found it almost impossible to get all of her work done during the school day.

To cut down on her hours, Perkins began exploring automated-grading systems, not grading everything that was assigned, and having students highlight the portions of their essays that corresponded to a grading rubric.

"I think this actually made me a better teacher because I became a lot more efficient and I had to prioritize what's worth it," she said. "And I had to be really judicious with my effort."

## **Quiet quitting doesn't have to mean you're no longer engaged in your job**

When Perkins first heard the term "quiet quitting" last year, it resonated with her, and she began posting videos on [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/%40millennialmsfrizz) about her experience.

"It was such a simple explanation to something that had been very life-changing for me and healthy for me," she said.

Perkins prefers the term "quiet working," however, because many teachers genuinely engage in their jobs and don't want to quit.

"You don't even have to just give up, but scale back on your commitment, or your presence, or your hustle," she said. "And you're still getting the job done. You're not shortening your company on their productivity. You're doing what you're expected to do."

Perkins says the effort looks different for everyone. For her, it meant giving 100 percent of herself between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., but not taking work home. "If I couldn't do it during my contract hours, I wasn't going to do it," she said.

Some people, however, choose to "just do enough not to get fired."

"They don't have aspirations to move up in that company," she said. "They do have aspirations to just clock in, clock out, and then go hiking. And that's good for them."

## **Sometimes, going above and beyond is the path to burnout**

Perkins has seen some critics argue that "quiet-quitting teachers" are doing students a disservice. But in her estimation, the expectation that teachers should always "go above and beyond" is the real problem, and that "just doing your job" should be enough.

A 2021 Gallup [poll](https://www.gallup.com/workplace/388481/employee-engagement-drops-first-year-decade.aspx) found that the share of US workers who were "engaged" in their work fell to 34% in 2021, the first decline in over a decade. Many teachers, whom society has long characterized as [overworked](https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcperna/2022/03/28/the-life-of-a-teacher-and-why-its-beyond-hard/) and [underpaid](https://www.businessinsider.com/10-alarming-facts-about-teacher-pay-in-the-united-states-2019-10) — and are being [fervently sought](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/8/18/23298916/teacher-shortages-debate-local-national) out by schools across the country looking to [fill openings](https://www.the74million.org/article/new-research-thousands-of-full-time-teacher-jobs-open-in-localized-state-shortages/) — have found themselves [drawn](https://www.wsj.com/articles/schools-out-for-summer-and-many-teachers-are-calling-it-quits-11655732689) to the quiet-quitting movement, said Perkins.

She believes the term "teacher shortage" is a misnomer: It's a "teacher exodus."

"Not because they became less passionate or became uncertified," she said. "But because it was time for them to not work under those conditions."

Though Perkins' future career path is unclear, her quality of life is better since she left the classroom: "I haven't had a single migraine since."