What is work? Is it simply a burden to be tolerated or something more meaningful to one's sense of identity and self-worth? And why does it matter? In a uniquely thought-provoking book, John W. Budd presents ten historical and contemporary views of work from across the social sciences and humanities. By uncovering the diverse ways in which we conceptualize work—such as a way to serve or care for others, a source of freedom, a source of income, a method of psychological fulfillment, or a social relation shaped by class, gender, race, and power—The Thought of Work reveals the wide-ranging nature of work and establishes its fundamental importance for the human experience. When we work, we experience our biological, psychological, economic, and social selves. Work locates us in the world, helps us and others make sense of who we are, and determines our access to material and social resources.

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JOHN W. BUDD is the Industrial Relations Land Grant Chair and Director of the Center for Human Resources and Labor Studies at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of Employment with a Human Face: Balancing Efficiency, Equity, and Voice, also from Cornell, and Labor Relations: Striking a Balance and coauthor of Invisible Hands, Invisible Objectives: Bringing Workplace Law and Public Policy into Focus.

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