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The Hypocrisy of Modern Slavery

By Dale Jodoin
 Columnist

People often talk about slavery as if it belongs only in the past. Schools teach it. Governments apologize for it. Activists shout about it. And while that history matters, something strange is happening. Everyone looks backward, but almost no one looks at the slavery happening today. It never fully ended. It changed shape and moved into the shadows. It learned to survive in silence, where most people are too distracted or too afraid to look.

Modern slavery hides in crowded back rooms and behind locked doors. It shows up in farm fields, restaurant kitchens, cleaning crews, construction sites, motels, and private homes. It exists anywhere someone can profit from a person who feels trapped. The chains are not metal. They are fear, debt, lies, and the constant threat of violence. These chains can be even harder to break than the old ones because they are invisible to the world around them.

Millions of people come from poor countries with hope in their hearts. Many find decent work and start new lives. But others fall into the hands of criminals. These criminals control their documents, movements, and money. They promise opportunity, then take everything away. They threaten families back home and warn victims not to speak a word. People who do not know the language or the law have almost no power to fight back. So they stay quiet and keep working, even when every part of their life feels stolen.

Politicians love to talk about compassion. They enjoy taking pictures, giving speeches, and saying the right words. Yet many of these same leaders support policies that make it easier for criminals to trap vulnerable people. Uncontrolled migration is a gift to traffickers because it opens wide paths for moving people without proper checks. Weak borders and soft rules make it simple for criminal networks to operate. Many officials refuse to admit this because the truth is uncomfortable and risky for their careers.

It is easier for them to talk about kindness than to confront cruelty. It is easier to argue about history than to face the danger happening right now. It is easier to point at old statues than at the criminal networks ruining real lives. Real compassion needs honesty. Real compassion means protecting the vulnerable even when the truth is unpleasant.

Governments claim they care about vulnerable people. They repeat that message so often it sounds rehearsed. Yet their policies often place those same people in harm's way. When rules weaken, criminals move fast. They offer rides, fake job promises, and hope. Then they take away freedom. They charge huge debts. They restrict movement. Some migrants think they are coming to work in farms or restaurants, but once they arrive, they are forced into dangerous labour or sex work. They are watched, monitored, and punished if they try to leave.

None of this is a secret. Police know it. Reporters know it. Even activists know it. Yet many of the same people who shout the loudest about injustice from centuries ago stay silent about the people suffering today. If someone raises questions about the issue, they are called hateful or cruel. That label scares many citizens into silence. And silence protects the criminals, not the victims.

The people hurt most by this silence are the migrants themselves. Many left home because they believed they could build a better life. They trusted the stories they heard about safety and opportunity. Instead, they find themselves under the control of gangs and labour brokers. These criminal groups are not small operations. Some run like full businesses with managers, debt collectors, and transport routes. Victims live in cramped rooms, work long hours, and rarely see a dollar of the money they earn.

Politicians do not want to talk about this because it does not fit their messaging. They prefer simple stories that make them look caring. Admitting that illegal migration brings real danger cracks those stories wide open. So they avoid the topic. Meanwhile, victims disappear into the system and criminals grow richer each year.

Real justice is not a slogan. It means enforcing laws already in place. It means having border systems that cannot be easily abused. It means treating illegal labour markets the same way we treat financial crime or organized crime. Criminal networks only survive because people in power refuse to confront them. They hope the problem stays invisible so they can keep repeating the same promises.

Regular citizens are caught in the middle of this confusion. They are told to feel guilty for events that happened long before they were born. At the same time, they are told they must not talk about crimes they see today. People feel the tension. They see the news about trafficking. They notice missing women. They hear about illegal labour raids. They watch border issues unfold on television. But the moment they ask a question, they are marked as villains. That tactic protects no one. It only helps the criminals.

Talking about modern slavery does not make someone hateful. It makes them honest. Ignoring it does not make someone kind. It makes them a bystander. And bystanders allow injustice to grow.

Ending modern slavery is possible. It starts with acknowledging the truth. It starts with understanding that criminals use weak systems to hurt vulnerable people. It starts with courage. It means saying clearly that open borders help criminals, not migrants. It means supporting police units that investigate trafficking instead of cutting their resources. It means demanding that leaders protect human life, not their public image.

Stopping slavery in the past required strength and moral clarity. Stopping it now will require the same. We need citizens willing to speak up even when others tell them to stay quiet. We need leaders willing to choose human dignity over applause. We need honesty more than ever because the cost of silence is measured in human lives.

History will look at this time and decide whether we stood up or turned away. It will ask whether we protected people suffering in silence or chose comfort instead. It will ask whether we learned anything from the past or allowed an old evil to return in a new form.

We still have time to choose the right path.



Job Seekers: Visibility Is Not Vanity; It Is a Strategy

By Nick Kossovan

The question "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" was posed by the Anglo-Irish philosopher George Berkeley to reflect on the concept of perception: is a sound only a sound if it's heard by someone?

Think of Berkeley's question as a job seeker: If employers don't know of your existence, do you exist? When you take the view that billions of people don't know you exist a recruiter or hiring manager, being aware of your existence is, to a degree, intimate knowledge. Being known, now easier than ever thanks to social media and the Internet, attracts opportunity. Visibility isn't about ego. It's not about chasing likes, being flashy, or striving to go viral. It's about proactively and publicly providing ongoing evidence of how you can be a value-add to an employer that'll enhance their profitability.

When you consistently show up—sharing your ideas, perspective, progress, milestone achievements, and especially your wins—whether on LinkedIn and other social media platforms, by giving speeches, publishing blog posts or articles, appearing on podcasts, or volunteering your experience and skills for a cause you believe in—you open doors. Consistent visibility shows ambition and purpose, indicating to employers that you're committed to your career.

Post an insight every day. Share articles with your thoughts. Post constructive comments on posts from people in your industry, profession, or companies you'd like to join. Make it a daily habit to reach out to 1 - 3 people, especially those you've neglected to keep in touch with, offering value such as offering to make an introduction, without asking for anything. Every interaction you initiate with someone, whether online or in person, builds your visibility.

Visibility happens in two ways:

1. 1-to-1 engagement with people who—this is key—are working in the industry or profession you want to be in, and
2. At scale in places where people working in your industry or profession gather, such as conferences, workshops, association meetings, and, of course, social media (e.g., LinkedIn groups).

Today, increasing your visibility starts with optimizing your LinkedIn profile, which many job seekers overlook. Profiles without a profile picture, a banner, or an 'About' summary that tells a compelling career story or quantifies the impact they had on their employers are common. By optimizing your LinkedIn profile—doing what many don't—you improve your visibility and discoverability—whether you appear in searches by recruiters, hiring managers, and those within your industry and/or profession looking to connect with like-minded people—which gives you a competitive advantage.

To increase the visibility and discoverability of your LinkedIn profile:

- Make sure your headline captures your value. ("Marketing Manager | 2024 Delivered 200% Traffic Growth via SEO & Content | Data-Driven Digital Transformation" or "Sales Director | 2024 Revenue: \$6.5M+ | Building Strong Client Relationships")
- Use the keywords and language employers use to describe your ideal role.
- Quantify your impact on your employer's profitability. (This is key! Employers aren't hiring 'nice to have' employees.)
- Join groups, write posts that start conversations, comment on posts, and make connections.

A fully optimized LinkedIn profile serves two purposes by providing:

1. Human decision-makers with assurance, and
2. LinkedIn's algorithm the information it needs to determine whether you're a good match.

A common oversight among job seekers is failing to extend their visibility beyond LinkedIn. LinkedIn isn't the only place recruiters, employers, and professionals hang out online. Publishing articles on blogging platforms such as Medium or Substack, sharing insights, and engaging in professional discussions on platforms with dedicated groups, such as Reddit, Quora, Slack, or Discord, help build a digital footprint that establishes your credibility and reinforces your expertise. You don't have to become a prolific content creator. Your goal is to curate an online presence that gets you noticed and communicates that you're an authority or subject matter expert (SME) in your industry or profession, which'll lead recruiters and employers to discover you and understand your value.

Even today, as deep as we are in the "digital age," your visibility needs to be the most potent outside the digital world. I never understood how someone could be a project manager, accountant, marketing director, supply chain analyst, or [whatever] for 15 years without having cultivated a professional network. With the surge in bad actors and AI-generated applications, it's increasingly common for recruiters and employers to avoid posting job openings and instead rely on referrals from employees, colleagues, mentors, and professional peers, thereby considerably broadening the hidden job market.

As I've mentioned in previous columns, job opportunities are all around you; the caveat is that they're attached to people. If those in your immediate circle—family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances—don't know you're looking for a job and the value you can offer an employer, then when they become aware of an opportunity, they won't think to mention you or pass it along to you. Visibility is a currency that puts you in a category of your own (not in the crowd) and pulls back the curtain to expose the job opportunities all around you. Telling everyone you know and meet that you're job searching can significantly speed up your search.