

Health and well-being

FACT SHEET

10 WAYS TO BE HAPPY AT WORK:

1. Choose to Be Happy at Work

Happiness is largely a choice. I can hear many of you arguing with me, but it's true. You can choose to be happy at work. Sound simple? Yes. But, simplicity is often profoundly difficult to put into action. I wish all of you had the best employer in the world, but, face it, you may not. So, think positively about your work. Dwell on the aspects of your work you like. Avoid negative people and gossip. Find co-workers you like and enjoy and spend your time with them. Your choices at work largely define your experience. You can choose to be happy at work.

2. Do Something You Love Every Single Day

You may or may not love your current job and you may or may not believe that you can find something in your current job to love, but you can. Take a look at yourself, your skills and interests, and find something that you can enjoy doing every day. If you do something you love every single day, your current job won't seem so bad.

3. Take Charge of Your Own Professional and Personal Development

A young employee complained to me recently that she wanted to change jobs because her boss was not doing enough to help her develop professionally. I asked her whom she thought was the person most interested in her development. The answer, of course, was her. You are the person with the most to gain from continuing to develop professionally. Take charge of your own growth; ask for specific and meaningful help from your boss, but march to the music of your personally developed plan and goals. You have the most to gain from growing - and the most to lose, if you stand still.

4. Take Responsibility for Knowing What Is Happening at Work

People often complain that they don't receive enough communication and information about what is happening with their company, their department's projects, or their co-workers. Passive vessels, they wait for the boss to fill them up with knowledge, and the knowledge rarely comes. Why? Because the boss is busy doing their job and doesn't know what you don't know. Seek out the information you need to work effectively. Develop an information network and use it. Assertively request a weekly meeting with your boss and ask questions to learn. You are in charge of the information you receive.

5. Avoid Negativity

Choosing to be happy at work means avoiding negative conversations, gossip, and unhappy people as much as possible. No matter how positively you feel, negative people have a profound impact on your psyche. Don't let the negative Neds and Nellies bring you down.

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6. Ask for Feedback Frequently

Have you made statements such as, "My boss never gives me any feedback, so I never know how I'm doing." Face it, you really know exactly how you're doing. Especially if you feel positively about your performance, you just want to hear him acknowledge you. If you're not positive about your work, think about improving and making a sincere contribution. Then, ask your boss for feedback. Tell him you'd really like to hear his assessment of your work. Talk to your customers, too; if you're serving them well, their feedback is affirming. You are responsible for your own development.

7. Make Only Commitments You Can Keep

One of the most serious causes of work stress and unhappiness is failing to keep commitments. Many employees spend more time making excuses for failing to keep a commitment, and worrying about the consequences of not keeping a commitment, than they do performing the tasks promised. Create a system of organisation and planning that enables you to assess your ability to complete a requested commitment. Don't volunteer if you don't have time. If your workload is exceeding your available time and energy, make a comprehensive plan and ask for help and resources. Don't wallow in the swamp of unkept promises.

8. Practice Professional Courage

If you are like most people, you don't like conflict and the reason why is simple. You've never been trained to participate in meaningful conflict, so you likely think of conflict as scary, harmful, and hurtful. Conflict can be all three; done well, conflict can also help you accomplish your work mission and your personal vision. Conflict can help you serve customers and create successful products. Happy people accomplish their purpose for working. Why let a little professional courage keep you from achieving your goals and dreams?

9. Make Friends

In their landmark book, *First, Break All The Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* (Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman list twelve important questions. When employees answered these questions positively, their responses were true indicators of whether people were happy and motivated at work. One of these key questions was, "Do you have a best friend at work?" Liking and enjoying your co-workers are hallmarks of a positive, happy work experience. Take time to get to know them. You might actually like and enjoy them. Your network provides support, resources, sharing, and caring.

10. If All Else Fails, Job Searching Will Make You Smile

If all of these ideas aren't making you happy at work, it's time to re-evaluate your employer, your job, or your entire career. You don't want to spend your life doing work you hate in an unfriendly work environment. Most work environments don't change all that much. But unhappy employees tend to grow even more disgruntled. You can secretly smile while you spend all of your non-work time job searching. It will only be a matter of time until you can quit your job - with a big smile.