

LIFE LINES

Improving your quality of life
One step at a time

Volume 5, Number 9



LOVING

WHAT YOU DO



"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful."
- Albert Schweitzer

Loving what you do doesn't have to mean you have the perfect job or that you are never stressed, frustrated or annoyed. It means taking pride in your work and wanting to be the very best you can be. It's about receiving satisfaction and enjoyment from what you do. And, have you noticed that people who like their jobs are often the ones who get the professional development opportunities, promotions, recognition and rewards? ¹

And, the good news — loving what you do is also good for your physical and mental health! People who are unhappy at work are more likely to be stressed, anxious, and/or angry and that can lead to:

- **Depression.** Stress hormones can affect the brain and in susceptible people, prolonged stress can lead to depression.²
- **Damaged relationships.** Feelings about work often spill over into our personal lives and we may take our anger and frustration out on those nearest to us.³
- **Weight gain.** Partly due to poor eating habits that are more likely during times of stress or unhappiness and

partly due to the stress hormone cortisol, our waist lines often expand when we are miserable at work.⁴

- **Lowered immune system.** It's well documented that prolonged stress can suppress our immune system and make us more susceptible to colds and other infections.⁵
- **Chronic diseases** such as diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Stress raises our blood sugar and our blood pressure and over time this can cause or worsen diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Stress has also been linked to the development of certain cancers.⁶



Loving What you Do

We spend a great deal of our lives working and if that work is making us unhappy, the effect on health, relationships and careers can be profound.

How to love what you do

Have you become discontented with your work? Maybe you've been in the same profession or job for a long time and the enthusiasm you once felt has gone. Or maybe you're simply bored or burned out. Maybe you're just hanging on hoping things will change. But hoping for change won't re-ignite the passion. You have to initiate the change and find ways to once again love what you do. You can begin by taking these small steps:

- **Choose to be happy.** Recognize that everyone plays an important role in the success of the organization and be proud of your contribution. Stay clear of gossip and negative people and try to focus on what's positive about your job. Adopting a positive attitude will not only lighten your overall mood, you'll get more respect and be given more responsibility. Who doesn't want a happy, positive person on their team? When people expect positive results, they usually get them.⁷
- **Change your duties.** No job is perfect and everyone gets bored from time to time. But if you are bored most of the time, look around your department or company. Is there a position or area that interests you? Are there duties you could assume that might lead to new opportunities? Talk to your supervisor and let them know you feel ready for more responsibility and ask how you can work towards this. Not only will this provide new challenges, it will demonstrate your initiative and work ethic.⁸
- **Keep learning.** You're never too old to refresh your career. Sign up for continuing education or professional development programs.⁹
- **Take breaks.** Most of us are busy. Many of us are so busy we eat lunch at our desks and hardly move until we finish for the day. But we need breaks to reenergize and renew our creativity and focus. Make sure you take a lunch break as well as short breaks throughout the day – even if they're just quick trips to the water fountain. And make sure you take time for regular vacations.¹⁰
- **Volunteer.** Most companies have a variety of committees looking for help. What interests you? Health and safety? Employee engagement? Corporate giving? Volunteering for cross-departmental projects or committees builds relationships throughout the company and provides a chance to explore different departments and positions. Check with your Human Resources department or supervisor to learn about volunteer projects that may already be in place and how you can get involved.¹¹

Finally, look to find fulfillment outside of work as well as at work. Reenergize yourself by doing things that bring you joy – playing an instrument, participating in a community group, being part of a sports team or spending more time having fun with family. You're likely to bring that happiness into your workplace and that will help you make any changes you need to.¹² For more information, contact your Employee and Family Assistance Program.

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| 1. Forbes | 5. Huffington Post | 9. Forbes |
| 2. American Psychological Association | 6. American Psychological Association | 10. HR Morning |
| 3. Huffington Post | 7. About money | 11. Forbes |
| 4. Mayo Clinic | 8. Forbes | 12. AskMen |



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