

BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR JOB

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OPEN YOUR MIND

One's mind, stretched by a new idea, never regains its original impressions.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

You can work through each exercise in this section all at one time, or you can spread it out over a whole week, doing a small amount at a time. We recommend you do these exercises right in this book. Alternatively, you can do the exercises in a "Love Your Current Job" journal and record your thoughts and your progress. Purchase your journal now to begin the process.

* * * * *

Your job may be frustrating and stressful on a regular basis. You may think that the only solution is to change jobs; however, the only thing that may need to be changed is your relationship to your job. As your relationship to your job improves, so will your attitude. This is not about doing your job the same old way and just pretending everything is fine; it is about improving small details that will make a big difference in your relationship to your work. Build on what you do enjoy, eliminate what you do not and open your mind to the possibilities of loving your work.

Recognize when you have allowed your thought patterns to become stuck "in the box" and are looking at the situation with a limiting viewpoint. Don't restrict your possibilities, expand your field of vision and begin to plan for a future full of new possibilities. Change your perceptions and change common frustrations into satisfactions. Begin to look for ways to enjoy your work. Review your relationships with others and work to improve them. Take back the power and create your own change. Consider what your skills and abilities are and become clear on how you are utilizing these assets in your current work situation. If they aren't being utilized at your work, make changes so that the real you will become a part of your job. Don't waste your talents just because your environment hasn't become aware of them. Make your potential or current

employer aware and be proactive. Create a schedule to change your relationship to your job. Having concrete goals and action steps will move you along your path.

It's very easy in today's workplace to get into patterns of behavior. You complete the same tasks the same way, work with the same people and generally have a familiar routine. It is comforting and known. Step back and look at how you may be held back and restricted by this routine. Consider what artificial blinders you may have in place that limit your viewpoint and creativity. Expand your field of vision and see the possibilities in your future. Look at your job with the eyes of an outsider and consider how they would find positives in your current work. Remember it is possible to live a life without limits.

You may think that it's easier to leave your job and find a new one than to stay and make the changes necessary to love your current job. You've worked at this job and this workplace for many days and it's become familiar to you. You look at it with the same perspective everyday and see only the negative. It seems simpler to leave and find a new job than to stay, make the commitment, look long and hard at yourself and your actions and make the needed changes to create a better, stronger relationship with your job. You benefit most by this. You become more relaxed, more open to new ideas, more creative. You complete your work quicker and at a higher level of quality. You feel better about yourself and your abilities, your superiors notice your increased level of performance and reward you accordingly. You enjoy your work and perform better at it. Your overall quality of life improves.

BRAINSTORM WAYS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

Barriers are most often imaginary obstacles that seem very real at the moment. When trying to change your current work situation into work you dreamed of, these barriers seem very real and scary. We come up with practical, realistic reasons why something won't work. What you must realize is whenever you find yourself resisting anything during this process, make sure you realize it is fear talking in most cases. When you fully begin to understand why you are having difficulty moving forward with the process, you'll be able to see and understand the fear for what it is and be ready to move on with confidence.

List the top 5 barriers keeping you from loving your work and then brainstorm solutions. Don't judge yourself...just list ideas as they occur to you. You can return later to evaluate them.

What are my barriers?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

How can I overcome these barriers?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

**LIST SKILLS AND ABILITIES YOU POSSESS AND
HOW YOU CAN USE THEM AT YOUR JOB**

To continue, look at how you view your abilities and skills at your job. Are they one of your barriers? It's easy to only look at what you can't do at your job and at areas in which your skills may be lacking. You often think about your failures and compare yourself unfavorably to others. Turn this around. Make a list of your skills and abilities. Be as general or specific as you'd like. Don't be humble - no one will see this list. Take credit for your accomplishments. Look at areas in which you have had success and extract what skills you used to achieve that success. Then determine how you can use these skills in your current job.

A **skill** is a strength of yours. It is something that you have interest in, develop over time and are good at. An **ability** is something that comes naturally to you. You are able to do something. A skill is something that you are good at, an ability is something that you can do.

Example: writing, oral communication, organizing events, research, project management, problem solving, idea generation and training others.

What skills and abilities do I possess?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can I put each one to use in my job?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

BUILD YOUR WORK AROUND WHAT GETS YOU EXCITED

Make a list of things in your work that make you feel good and excite you. For example, do you enjoy: brainstorming ideas, giving presentations, training others and solving problems? How can you work more of those things into your job? Can you volunteer on a project or talk to your superior and ask to be given more of the work you enjoy? Be creative and expansive in your thinking. Come up with 3-5 ways you can use each enjoyable activity/skill in your work now.

What gets me excited about my job?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

How can I do more exciting activities or skills in my job?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

FOCUS ON WHAT IS GOING WELL

It's easy to focus on things that are going wrong when you don't enjoy your job. If you take some time and review each aspect of your job, you'll be likely to find quite a few areas that you enjoy and that are going well. Change your focus to these areas and on increasing them and watch your attitude and relationship to your work move in a positive direction.

What areas are going well for me?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can I better focus on these areas and add more of them to my work?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

**IMAGINE
NEW POSSIBILITIES**

*Become a possibilitarian.
No matter how dark things seem to be or actually are,
raise your sights and see possibilities;
always see them, for they're always there.*

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

**SEEK OUT NEW CAREER POSSIBILITIES
WITHIN YOUR COMPANY**

Look around the company you work for. What other employees have jobs you like or would like to do? Seek out those employees and conduct informational interviews with them. This may help you consider making a lateral shift within the company. This may also help to give you ideas about how you can change your job to incorporate more things you enjoy.

What three people have jobs I like:

Person 1. _____

Job Title: _____

Person 2. _____

Job Title: _____

Person 3. _____

Job Title: _____

What quality/activity about their jobs do I like?

Person 1. _____

Person 2. _____

Person 3. _____

How I can incorporate these qualities/activities into my job?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

**GET YOUR COMPANY'S SUPPORT
TO MEET YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS**

Many companies will reimburse you either partially or in full for continuing your education. You'll gain more personal satisfaction from this and then can increase your positive attitude toward your job. If your company doesn't offer this, suggest it to them. Or look for seminars and classes on your own.

What classes/seminars can I take to expand my mind and improve my professional career?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

**LEVERAGE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS
IN YOUR JOB**

There may be many aspects of your job that you have little or no control over. That can cause frustration. You do have control over your own behavior. Look for ways you can accomplish goals. Not only will this increase your profile in the company and potentially lead to promotion or a raise, but it will increase your positive view of yourself and your capabilities.

Which areas of my job can I leverage to my benefit?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

- 5. _____

SEE NEW POSSIBILITIES

Consider a goal you want to achieve. Do you immediately find yourself thinking of all the obstacles in your path or all the reasons you cannot achieve that goal? Change your perspective: Consider the steps necessary to achieve that goal. Do this for 3-5 goals in your work life so that you become more familiar with the pattern of thinking of possibilities instead of obstacles.

Goal: _____

Steps to Achieve Goal: _____

Goal: _____

Steps to Achieve Goal: _____

LOVE YOUR WORK

Goal: _____

Steps to Achieve Goal: _____

Goal: _____

Steps to Achieve Goal: _____

Goal: _____

Steps to Achieve Goal: _____

FOCUS ON YOURSELF

Instead of focusing on your environment, your coworkers, your superiors or the company policy, try focusing on yourself. Improve what you do. Be creative, look at how you can improve your attitudes and behaviors. If circumstances in your job are negative, how can you contribute to making them more positive?

What are ways I can focus on myself? Which behaviors and attitudes can I change?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What ways can I contribute to making my work environment more positive?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

TURN FRUSTRATIONS AROUND

*The gem cannot be polished without friction,
nor man perfected without trial.*

CONFUCIUS

Your job may be full of frustrations. You may be underpaid, overworked, bored, unappreciated or any combination of the most common job frustrations. Yet, with some effort and creativity, you can turn your frustrations around. The long list of frustrations can change into a list of desirable job qualities. In this exercise, you'll examine the top ten job frustrations. Choose three and explore how you can transform the frustrations into the desired job qualities. Remember to keep your focus on listing steps to achieve a goal. You are not coming up with a list of reasons you **cannot** achieve that goal.

1. LACK OF MEANING

It's a common desire to seek meaning in your life and work. You want to feel that what you do makes a difference in the world and helps people. You may be caught up in administrative details, budgets and deadlines. You may feel that you are only working to serve the continuation of the company and are not actively accomplishing any higher goals.

How can I bring more meaning into my work?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

2. LACK OF CHALLENGE

Our work often consists of the same tasks repeated over and over. Boredom sets in. There is often not much room for variety or creativity. We come to work at the same time, work on the same things, eat lunch with the same people, etc. We aren't being used for our true potential. We are doing less than what we are capable of and this is not only frustrating, but de-motivating as well.

How will I bring more challenge to my work? What projects can I volunteer for? What changes can I make in my daily routine?

3. LACK OF AUTONOMY/CONTROL

You may feel that there are many aspects of your job that are out of your control. You are assigned projects and tasks, told when your deadlines are and expected to conform to preset guidelines. You may feel that you don't have the freedom to express your creativity.

In which areas of my work do I have control? In which areas will I create more autonomy?

4. NO RECOGNITION OF PERFORMANCE

You may feel that you work many hours and contribute many good ideas and don't get much feedback. You may get an annual performance review or some occasional verbal praise but you crave more.

How will I ask for feedback and constructive guidance from my superiors? How will I make the time to take note of my accomplishments for myself and for my superiors?

5. COMPENSATION

Lack of proper compensation is probably the biggest complaint in today's workplace. You may feel underpaid, lack the benefits you desire or have an inadequate profit sharing/pension plan.

How will I find creative ways to ask for and receive more compensation? What suggestions can I make that will not only benefit me but the whole company? What non-monetary compensation do I get for my job and how can I increase that?

6. OFFICE POLITICS

It can be draining and frustrating to have to deal with gossip, rumors, back-stabbing and more. There may be people who dislike you or who go out of their way to make your work life unpleasant.

How will I rise above office politics and choose to not have it affect me? How will I encourage cooperation instead of competition and how will I contribute to creating a good work environment?

7. TIME PRESSURE

Deadlines are a constant presence in your work life. You have too little time allotted for too many projects. You feel pressured and overworked.

How will I get work done ahead of deadlines? Will I delegate, ask for help, say no to unimportant tasks? How will I take back control, be proactive and not have deadline problems?

8. LACK OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

It's a common human need to feel that you are accomplishing something in your work. You need to set and achieve goals and feel that you're making a positive contribution to the company. Many jobs may not provide this in an obvious way. You need to find ways to contribute to the larger picture and to not feel that the same issues keep getting recycled.

How will I increase my feeling of accomplishment at my job? If I don't feel that there are any, what are some ways I will create them? Is there a management advisory committee I can join to help initiate change and make the work environment better for everyone?

9. TOO MANY HOURS

A "typical" work week is 40 hours each week: 5 days per week of 8 hours each day. You may be working considerably more hours. It's not unusual for people to work between 50 - 70 hours each week.

How will I restructure my schedule so that I work less hours? Does my company offer flex-time, telecommuting or other options? What options will I suggest to the company?

ENJOY YOUR WORK

I never did a day's work in my life. It was all fun.

THOMAS EDISON

Enjoying your work may come easy to you some days. The work flows effortlessly, you enjoy your coworkers, you feel in control and you are happy with your job. Other days it may take an effort. Deadlines loom, office politics run rampant, you and your coworkers are not getting along and you are miserable. Take time and make a conscious effort to try one of these ways to enjoy your work. Experiment - for one week, pick a different activity each day. See which activities bring you the most joy and happiness and schedule them into your calendar so you won't forget to do them. Feel free to write your thoughts and ideas on the lines below each section as you read each recommendation.

1. SLOW DOWN

Slow down and enjoy the work you are doing. Don't rush just to finish. Take time to enjoy the process so that the journey of work becomes wonderful. Focus on quality over quantity and let your mind concentrate on one thing at a time. Shut your eyes and take three deep breaths, slowly. Concentrate on your breathing as you inhale and exhale. Feel your body settle and focus. Do it now.

How will I slow down?

2. APPRECIATE A COWORKER

Pick one of your coworkers and schedule a meeting with him (or her). Spend the whole time showing him how much you appreciate all that he does and who he is.

How will I show my coworkers I appreciate them?

3. APPRECIATE YOURSELF

Take yourself to lunch one day each week and make a list of your accomplishments for that week. Take the time to pat yourself on the back. What did you do great this week? Did you solve a problem, deal successfully with coworkers, bring in more business?

What will I do to show that I appreciate myself?

4. BE GRATEFUL FOR 10 MINUTES

Spend 10 minutes each day increasing your awareness of the gratefulness you have at work. Make a list of all the things you have to be grateful at your job. You can do this in the morning before work or at lunch or at the end of the day.

What do I have to be grateful for at my job?

5. ASK FOR POSITIVE FEEDBACK

You don't have to wait for your annual review to get positive feedback on the work you're doing. Ask for it on your performance on the current project. Make sure the person giving the feedback is aware of addressing only the positive.

Who will I ask for positive feedback?

8. SCHEDULE A FUN BREAK IN YOUR DAY

Take a fifteen-minute fun break every day. Read a funny story, work on a crossword puzzle or find a coworker to tell you a joke. Go the restroom and make faces at yourself in the mirror, listen to an audiotape of your favorite comedian or keep some whimsical toys in your desk and play with them. Do whatever brings a smile to your face and reminds you that fun is part of your life too.

What will I do for my fun break?

9. MODEL A COWORKER

Find at least one coworker who enjoys her (or his) job. Observe her and see how she enjoys her job even when it seems difficult or stressful.

Which coworker do I admire? Why?

10. BRAINSTORM WITH COWORKERS

Make a support group with coworkers. Meet weekly and discuss ways and ideas for bringing more fun into your work and ways to enjoy your work. A coworker may have a solution for a problem area for you.

Who will I ask to be in a support group with me?

ACTION ITEMS:

- [] Review the material in this section. Focus on your answers.
- [] Try each one of the recommended ten ways to enjoy your job.
- [] Schedule the ones you enjoy the most to be on-going in your calendar.
- [] Integrate at least three of the ways to enjoy your job into your work today and each day this week.

NOTES:

IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS

Find a job you like and you add five days to every week.

H. JACKSON BROWN

Enrich the quality of your life on the job by cultivating friendships or deeper relationships with your coworkers. If you don't think that you could do this, choose one person to start with. Go to lunch with him (or her) and gradually get to know him better and spend time making the relationship more meaningful. Another benefit is that you will develop a network for support and encouragement.

Below are 5 ways you can relate better to your coworkers. Feel free to write your thoughts and ideas on the lines below each section as you read each recommendation.

1. ACCEPT AND SEE THEM FOR WHO THEY ARE

Think of a coworker who challenges you. Look for the positive instead of the negative in him (or her). Step back and detach from your agenda and viewpoint and look at him with new eyes. How will you accept his imperfections and shortcomings as well as his strengths and talents?

PRIMARY MOTIVATORS IN YOUR WORK

*Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm,
and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things:
first, an ideal which takes the imagination by storm;
and second, a definite intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice.*

ARNOLD TOYNBEE

Understand the internal motivation in your work. You will confront barriers and challenges along the way as you continue your journey through work. You can reduce your fear of these barriers and challenges by taking the time to be aware of your motivators.

Examples:

- *Challenge: volunteer for new projects*
- *Growth: take seminars on a new topic*
- *Achievement: work on smaller projects so you can see results more often*
- *Recognition: work on higher profile projects and volunteer for leadership roles*
- *Enabling others to feel better: give positive feedback to coworkers every day*

What are my motivators? What action/steps can I take to bring them into my work?

Motivator: _____

Action/Steps: _____

Motivator: _____

Action/Steps: _____

Motivator: _____

Action/Steps: _____

LEVERAGE MENTORING

*People need role models at every step of their lives... not just when they are kids.
Don't expect a role model to come along all by him or herself.
There are classy people out there who want to help.
Instead of waiting for somebody to take you under their wing,
go out there and find a good wing to climb under.*

DAVE THOMAS

A mentor is someone who is doing what you want to do. A mentor gives you clear instruction and guidance. A mentor teaches you the best practices he (or she) learned from experience and wisdom. This advice from your mentor makes the process easier. Mentors have a way in which they touch us, change us, reach us, see us, and care for us. We yearn for this type of connection throughout our lives.

The corporate world is recognizing the need for mentoring. 59% of Fortune 500 companies include mentoring as part of the growth and development of their employees. Most corporations have added mentoring because they are having difficulty keeping employees due to high turnover. Mentoring has helped influence employees to stay due to the close relationships established in the mentoring relationship.

Describe the person and the characteristics that make up the mentor you would want to support you:

Person 1. _____

Characteristics: _____

Person 2. _____

Characteristics: _____

Person 3. _____

Characteristics: _____

Person 4. _____

Characteristics: _____

BECOME A CHANGE LEADER

We must be the change we wish to see in the world.

MAHATMAS GANDHI

Every great leader has one thing in common. They recognize someone must take charge and make the decisions. Strategy is planned and a course of action is begun to achieve change because of that person. You can be a change leader at any time in your life and while holding any position or job. You don't have to be a manager to take charge of your own life and lead your own change.

One certainty in life is that the future holds unpredictable changes for you. We start every day not knowing exactly what to expect. Life brings lessons and opportunities that we don't always welcome. This is a common experience shared by many people.

People are scared of making changes. It's never easy! It forces us to take risks, become vulnerable and open ourselves to the unknown. Rise above that fear to become the special someone you know you're capable of being. View change as a good thing. Beyond every corner is a new opportunity waiting to be discovered.

How do you change the job you have into the one you've always dreamed of when you might think you have no control? You have a boss, a company with policies and procedures and clearly defined responsibilities. In order to make a change, you must lead your own change. This is done by becoming what I call a change leader.

People can make change without being change leaders. However, the most significant benefits are gained when you have courage to transform your attitude toward change from one of timidity and resistance to one of strength and appreciation of the opportunity to make your life better in the work you are currently doing. Now you can take an active role and manage and direct it - change your views of life so that you're always looking for new opportunities and viewing change as a positive force.

All change leaders have this unique quality within them. Change becomes easier when you see it not as the mountain that seems too high, but as a gentle slope. Each step takes you gradually closer to creating your dream job at your current job.

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STEPS TO BECOMING A CHANGE LEADER

1. CREATE TOMORROW. DON'T MAINTAIN YESTERDAY

Anything that doesn't support what is most important to you, needs to be abandoned. For example, when my clients come to me for help in loving their work, they are making a statement to themselves that the process is one of the most important aspects of their lives and needs to be treated this way. Thus, anything that interferes with this, must be abandoned.

What will I do to create the tomorrow that I most want?

2. SEE YOUR CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Welcome unexpected difficulties because they represent opportunities to make something better. This process isn't an easy one but the rewards can be significant.

What recent challenge will I turn into an opportunity? How?

3. BE WILLING TO RISK

People are used to maintaining the status quo and not making changes. When you've been in the same career for years, it is comfortable and familiar. There are hardly any risks. Taking risks is about becoming what you most want for yourself. It's important to know that when we risk, we are moving out of our comfort zone to a place that feels like an unknown.

How will I embrace my passion and blend it with my past experience to make my current job my dream job?

4. FOCUS ON SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES...NOT PROBLEMS

Problems can't be ignored, but it's vital to focus on the opportunities that you'll be attracting in your life as you change your perspective towards your job. View problems in the context of the larger vision you have for your life, and they become less important. Also, take note of the successes you've had as you move forward on this change journey so you will feel excited for what you've gained and accomplished along the way. By taking small steps with each success, you begin to make a major fundamental change.

What success have I had so far in my desire to change?

5. USE RESOURCES WISELY

A resource comes in such forms as energy, money and time. Let go of any activities that won't move you toward the change you most desire. The question to ask is, "If I am to focus my resources on what is most important, will I do this activity?" If the answer is no, spend your resources on an activity that does advance your goals. Always question how best you can use your resources for each minute of your day.

Which of my activities are worthy of my resources? Which ones will I let go of?

6. IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES

Begin to realize the new and exciting opportunities that lie ahead within your work. Don't neglect this part of yourself. When you honor the new, exciting and powerful possibilities that are within your life, everything has a way of supporting, cooperating and assisting you towards the possibility.

What potentially new and exciting opportunity lies ahead for me?

7. TAKE ACTION TODAY FOR WHAT YOU WANT TOMORROW

Taking action is about embracing the concepts of discipline, motivation and perseverance. It's never easy to stay focused and in pursuit of what you want. When you are taking action, your steps should be specific, achievable, realistic and timely.

What are three concrete ways will I become a change leader at my current job?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review the material in this section. Focus on your answers.
- Identify a behavior you plan to remove from your everyday activities in order to create a better tomorrow for yourself.
- Identify a difficulty you are currently facing in your work and realize the positive rewards you will receive when you overcome it.
- Identify an action that might be considered "risky" in your job and act on it.
- Begin and keep a list of all the successes you have had on your journey to improve your job.
- Identify an activity that will advance your goals, and schedule a time in your day to give it your focused attention.
- Review your list of new and exciting possibilities. Look forward to your future.
- Choose one of the concrete ways you listed above to become a change leader in your job and do it today.

NOTES:

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